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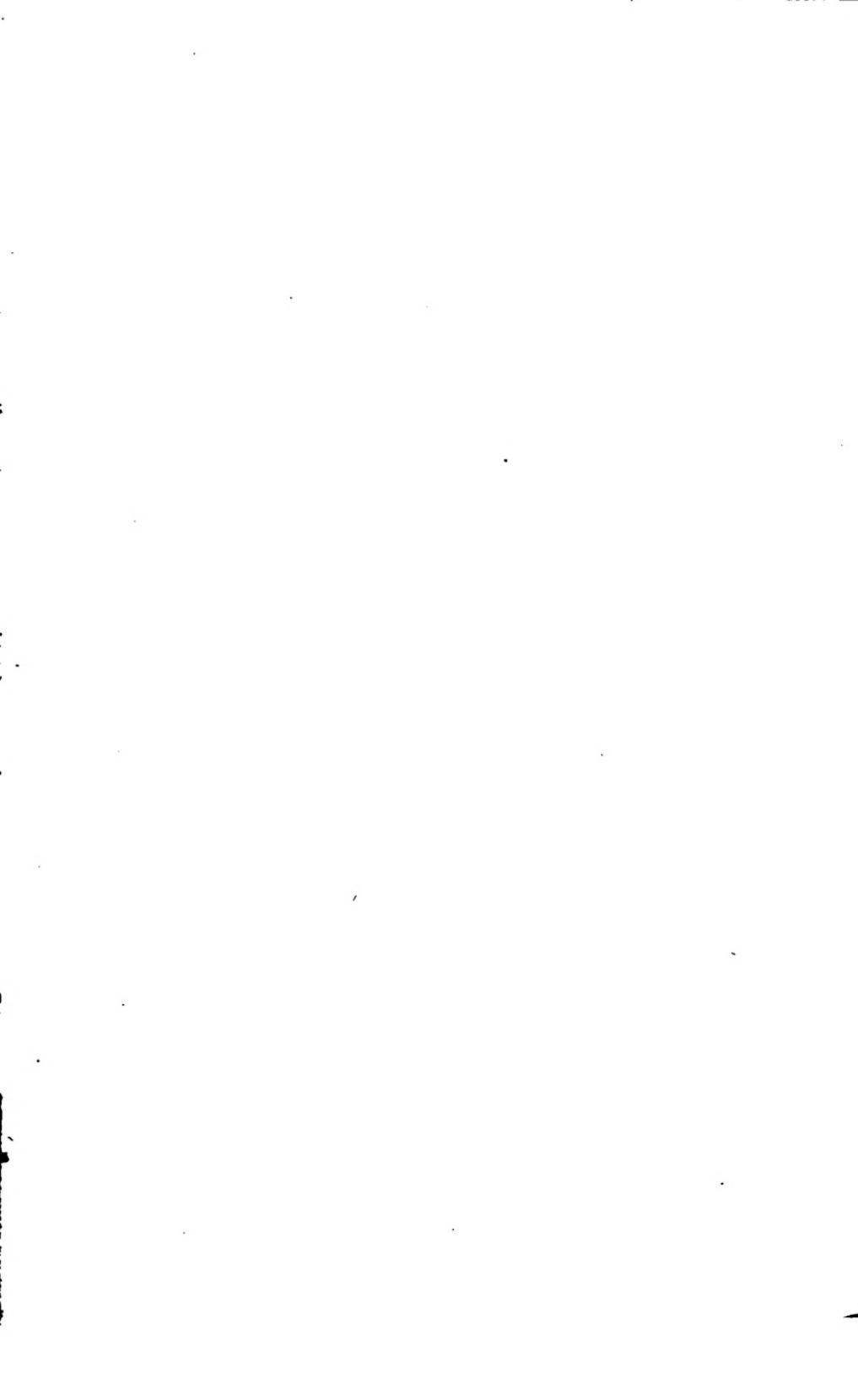
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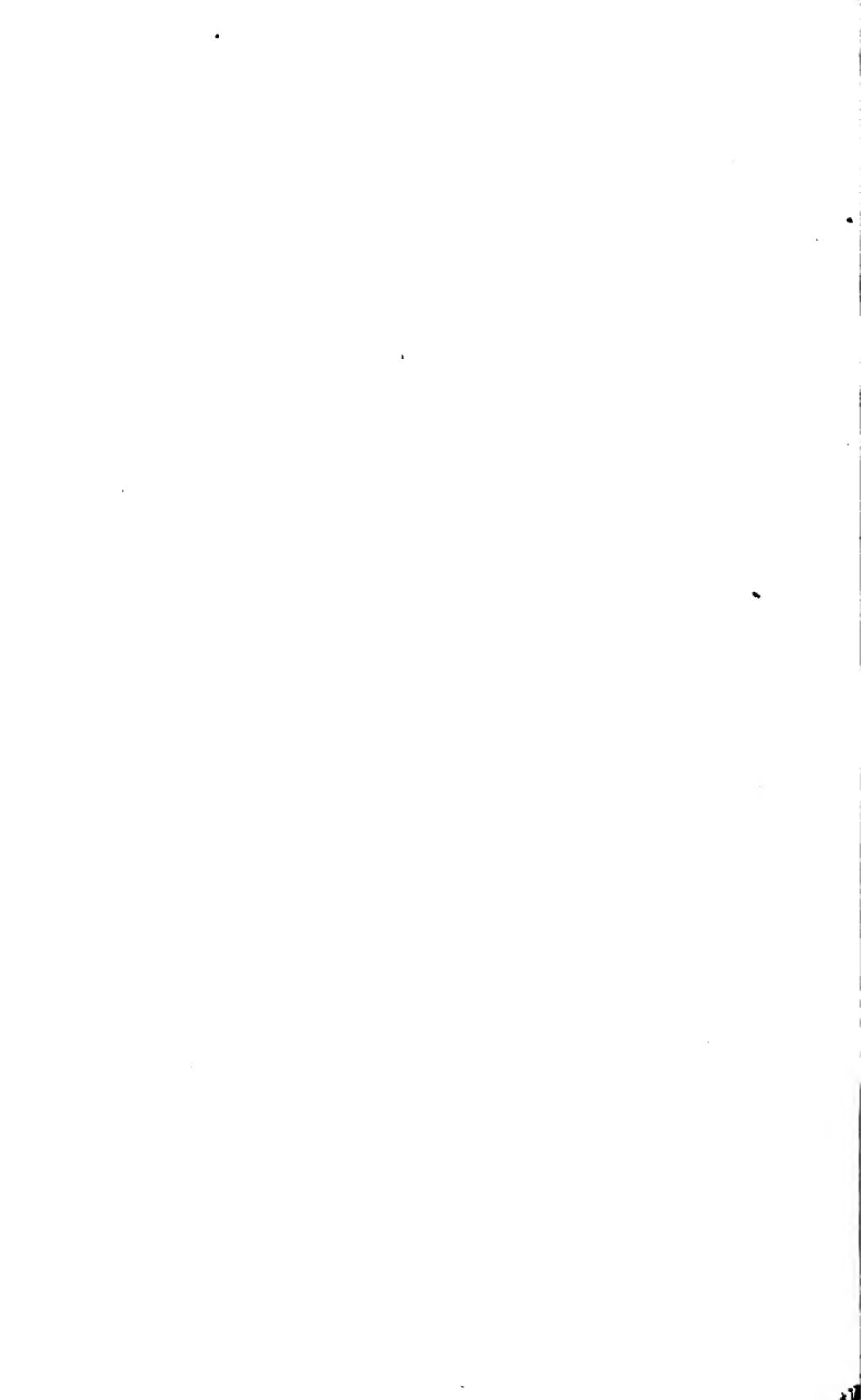
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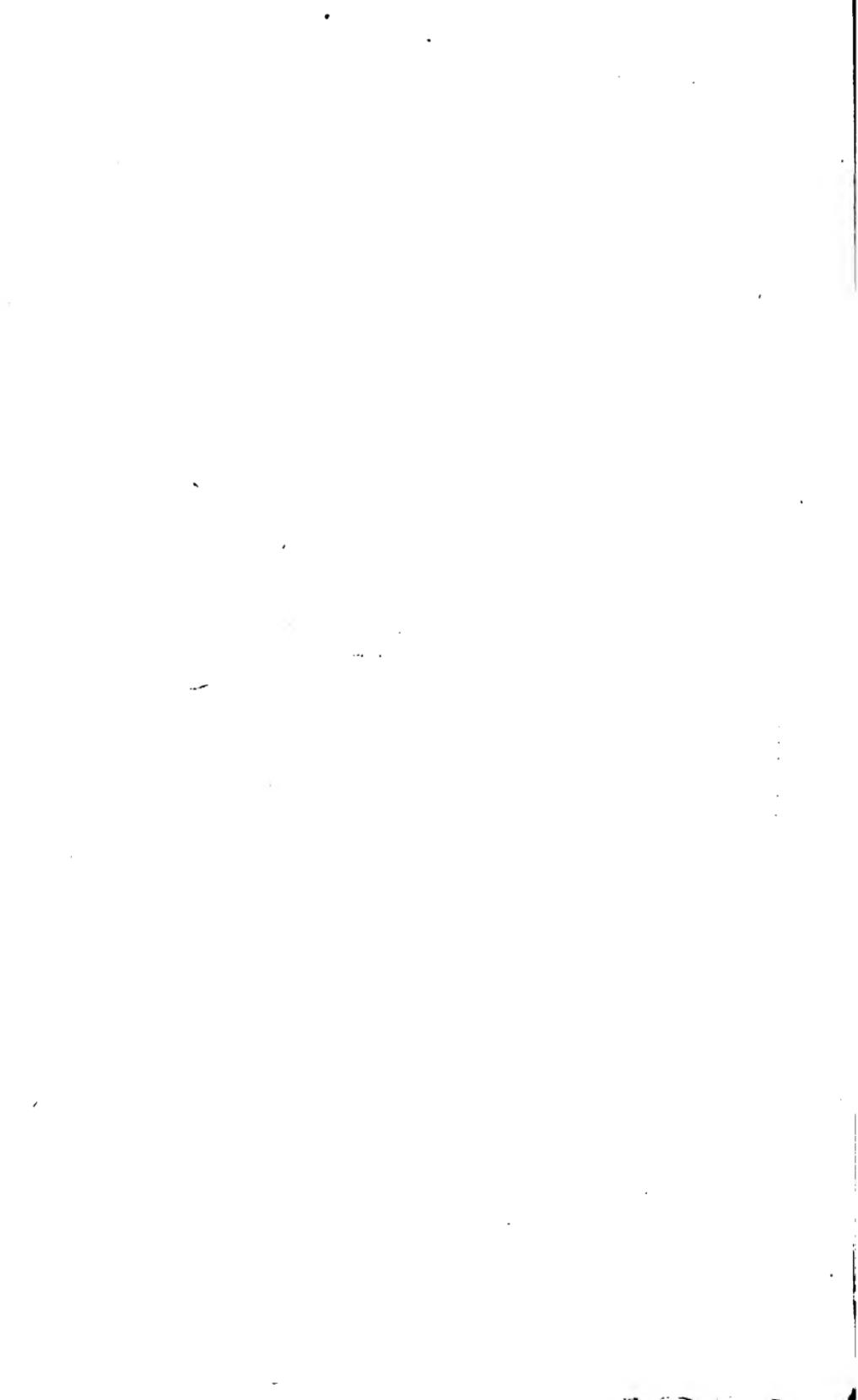








THE DIAMOND NECKLACE



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THE
DIAMOND NECKLACE
BY
THOMAS CARLYLE



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
1913

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Lawrence Curtis

NOTE

“ I have also, with an effort, accomplished the projected piece on the Diamond Necklace. It was finished this day week; really a queer kind of thing, of some forty and odd pages. Jane at first thought we should print it at our own charges, set our name on it, and send it out in God’s name. Neither she nor I are now so sure of it, but will consider it. My attempt was to make reality ideal; there is considerable significance in that notion of mine, and I have not yet seen the limit of it, nor shall till I have tried to go as far as it will carry me. The story of the *Diamond Necklace* is all told in that paper with the strictest fidelity, yet in a kind of *musical way.*”

Carlyle to his brother

December 24, 1833.





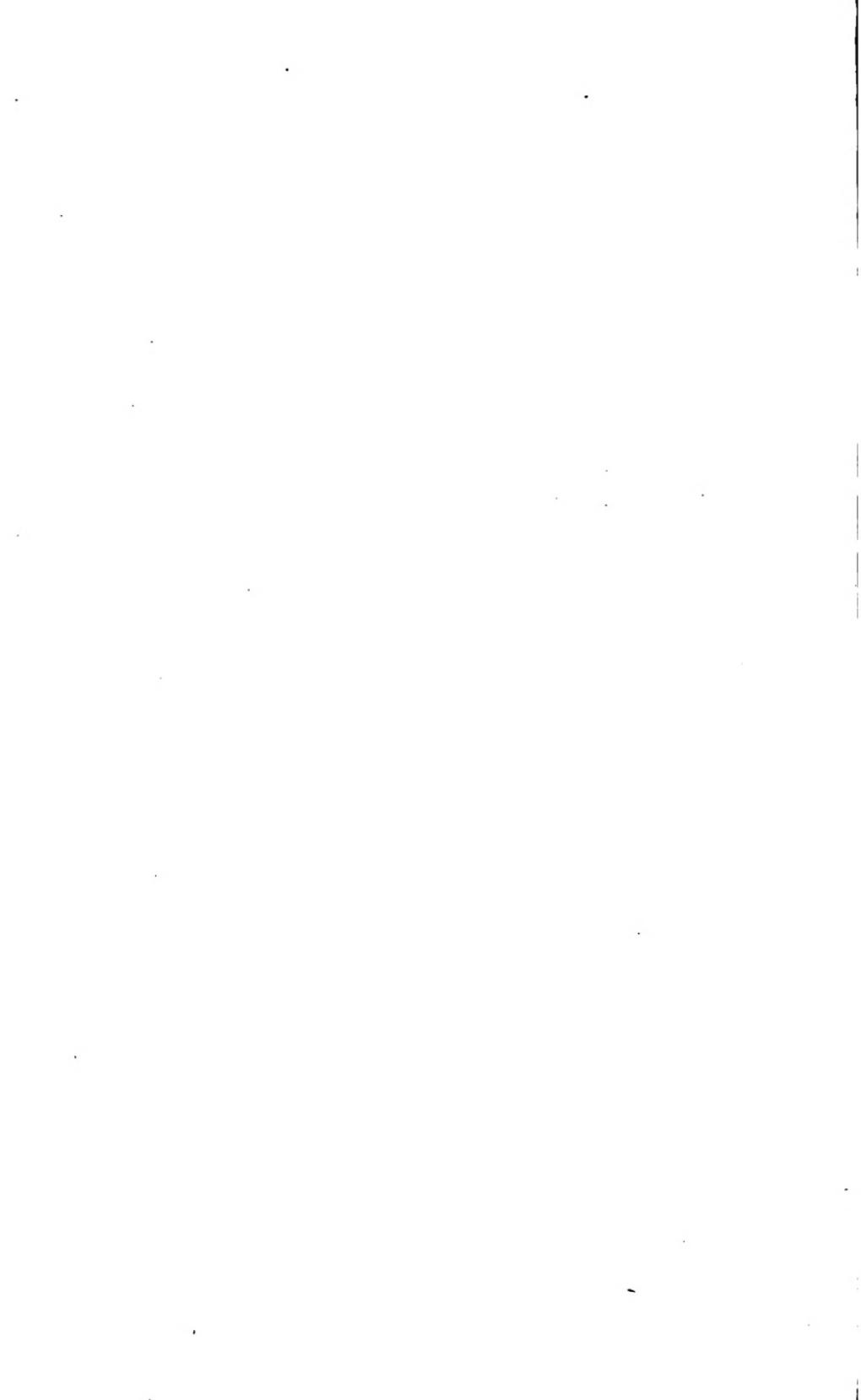
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THE DIAMOND NECKLACE





THE
DIAMOND NECKLACE
CHAPTER I
AGE OF ROMANCE

THE Age of Romance has not ceased; it never ceases; it does not, if we will think of it, so much as very sensibly decline. "The passions are repressed by social forms; great passions no longer show themselves?" Why, there are passions still great enough to replenish Bedlam, for it never wants tenants; to suspend men from bed-posts, from improved-drops at the west end of Newgate. A passion that explosively shivers asunder the Life it took rise in, ought to be regarded as considerable: more

no passion, in the highest heyday of Romance, yet did. The passions, by grace of the Supernal and also of the Infernal Powers (for both have a hand in it), can never fail us.

And then, as to "social forms," be it granted that they are of the most buckram quality, and bind men up into the pitiful-est, straitlaced, commonplace existence,—you ask, Where is the Romance? In the Scotch way one answers, Where is it not? That very spectacle of an Immortal Nature, with faculties and destiny extending through Eternity, hampered and bandaged up, by nurses, pedagogues, posture-masters, and the tongues of innumerable old women (named "force of public opinion"); by pre-judice, custom, want of knowledge, want of money, want of strength, into, say, the meagre Pattern-Figure that, in these days, meets you in all thoroughfares: a "god-created Man," all but abnegating the character of Man; forced to exist, automatised,

mummy-wise (scarcely in rare moments audible or visible from amid his wrappings and cerements), as Gentleman or Gigman; and so selling his birthright of Eternity for the three daily meals, poor at best, which Time yields: — is not this spectacle itself highly romantic, tragical, if we had eyes to look at it? The highborn (highest-born, for he came out of Heaven) lies drowning in the despicableness puddles; the priceless gift of Life, which he can have but *once*, for he waited a whole Eternity to be born, and now has a whole Eternity waiting to see what he will do when born, — *this* priceless gift we see strangled slowly out of him by innumerable packthreads; and there remains of the glorious Possibility, which we fondly named Man, nothing but an inanimate mass of foul loss and disappointment, which we wrap in shrouds and bury underground, — surely with well-merited tears. To the Thinker here lies Tragedy enough; the epitome and marrow of all Tragedy whatsoever.

But so few are Thinkers? Ay, Reader, so few think; there is the rub! Not one in the thousand has the smallest turn for thinking; only for passive dreaming and hearsaying, and active babbling by rote. Of the eyes that men do glare withal so few can *see*. Thus is the world become such a fearful confused Treadmill; and each man's task has got entangled in his neighbour's, and pulls it awry; and the Spirit of Blindness, Falsehood, and Distraction, justly named the Devil, continually maintains himself among us; and even hopes (were it not for the Opposition, which by God's grace will also maintain itself) to become supreme. Thus, too, among other things, has the Romance of Life gone wholly out of sight: and all History, degenerating into empty invoice-lists of Pitched Battles and Changes of Ministry; or still worse, into "Constitutional History," or "Philosophy of History," or "Philosophy Teaching by Experience," is become dead, as the Al-

manacs of other years,— to which species of composition, indeed, it bears, in several points of view, no inconsiderable affinity.

“Of all blinds that shut-up men’s vision,” says one, “the worst is Self.” How true! How doubly true, if Self, assuming her cunningest, yet miserablest disguise, come on us, in never-ceasing, all-obscuring reflexes from the innumerable Selves of others; not as Pride, not even as real Hunger, but only as Vanity, and the shadow of an imaginary Hunger for Applause; under the name of what we call “Respectability”! Alas now for our Historian: to his other spiritual deadness (which, however, so long as he physically breathes, cannot be considered *complete*) this sad new magic influence is added! Henceforth his Histories must all be screwed up into the “dignity of History.” Instead of looking fixedly at the *Thing*, and first of all, and beyond all, endeavouring to *see* it, and fashion a living Picture of it, not a wretched politico-meta-

physical Abstraction of it, he has now quite other matters to look to. The Thing lies shrouded, invisible, in thousandfold hallucinations, and foreign air-images: What did the Whigs say of it? What did the Tories? The Priests? The Freethinkers? Above all, What will my own listening circle say of *me* for what I say of it? And then his Respectability in general, as a literary gentleman; his not despicable talent for philosophy! Thus is our poor Historian's faculty directed mainly on two objects: the Writing and the Writer, both of which are quite extraneous; and the Thing written-of fares as we see. Can it be wonderful that Histories, wherein open lying is not permitted, are unromantic? Nay, our very Biographies, how stiff-starched, poisonless, hollow! They stand there respectable; and—what more? Dumb idols; with a skin of delusively painted wax-work; inwardly empty, or full of rags and bran. In our England especially, which in these days is become the

chosen land of Respectability, Life-writing has dwindled to the sorrowfullest condition; it requires a man to be some disrespectable, ridiculous Boswell before he can write a tolerable Life. Thus, too, strangely enough, the only Lives worth reading are those of Players, emptiest and poorest of the sons of Adam; who nevertheless were sons of his, and brothers of ours; and by the nature of the case, had already bidden Respectability good-day. Such bounties, in this as in infinitely deeper matters, does Respectability shower down on us. Sad are thy doings, O *Gig*; sadder than those of Juggernaut's Car: that, with huge wheel, suddenly crushes asunder the bodies of men; thou in thy light-bobbing Long-Acre springs, gradually winnowest away their souls!

Depend upon it, for one thing, good Reader, no age ever seemed the Age of Romance to *itself*. Charlemagne, let the Poets talk as they will, had his own provocations

in the world : what with selling of his poultry and pot-herbs, what with wanton daughters carrying secretaries through the snow ; and, for instance, that hanging of the Saxons over the Weserbridge (four thousand of them, they say, at one bout), it seems to me that the Great Charles had his temper ruffled at times. Roland of Roncesvalles, too, we see well in thinking of it, found rainy weather as well as sunny ; knew what it was to have hose need darning ; got tough beef to chew, or even went dinnerless ; was saddle-sick, calumniated, constipated (as his madness too clearly indicates) ; and oftenest felt, I doubt not, that this was a very Devil's world, and he, Roland himself, one of the sorriest caitiffs there. Only in long subsequent days, when the tough beef, the constipation, and the calumny had clean vanished, did it all begin to seem Romantic, and your Turpins and Ariostos found music in it. So, I say, is it *ever* ! And the more, as your true hero, your true

Roland, is ever *unconscious* that he is a hero: this is a condition of all greatness.

In our own poor Nineteenth Century, the Writer of these lines has been fortunate enough to see not a few glimpses of Romance; he imagines his Nineteenth is hardly a whit less romantic than that Ninth, or any other since centuries began. Apart from Napoleon, and the Dantons, and the Mirabeaus, whose fire-words of public speaking, and fire-whirlwinds of cannon and musketry, which for a season darkened the air, are perhaps at bottom but superficial phenomena, he has witnessed, in remotest places, much that could be called romantic, even miraculous. He has witnessed overhead the infinite Deep, with greater and lesser lights, bright-rolling, silent-beaming, hurled forth by the Hand of God: around him and under his feet, the wonderfullest Earth, with her winter snow-storms and her summer spice-airs; and, unaccountablest of all, *bimself* standing there. He stood in a lapse of Time;

he saw Eternity behind him, and before him. The all-encircling mysterious tide of FORCE, thousandfold (for from force of Thought to force of Gravitation what an interval!) billowed shoreless on ; bore him too along with it,—he too was part of it. From its bosom rose and vanished, in perpetual change, the lordliest Real-Phantasmagory, which men name *Being* ; and ever anew rose and vanished ; and ever that lordliest many-coloured scene was full, another yet the same. Oak-trees fell, young acorns sprang ; Men too, new-sent from the Unknown, he met, of tiniest size, who waxed into stature, into strength of sinew, passionate fire and light : in other men the light was growing dim, the sinews all feeble ; then sank, motionless, into ashes, into invisibility ; returned *back* to the Unknown, beckoning him their mute farewell. He wanders still by the parting-spot ; cannot hear *them* ; they are far, how far !— It was a sight for angels, and archangels ; for, indeed, God himself

had made it wholly. One many-glancing asbestos-thread in the Web of Universal-History, spirit-woven, it rustled there, as with the howl of mighty winds, through that “wild-roaring Loom of Time.” Generation after generation, hundreds of them or thousands of them from the unknown Beginning, so loud, so stormful-busy, rushed torrent-wise, thundering down, down ; and fell all silent, — nothing but some feeble reëcho, which grew ever feebler, struggling up ; and Oblivion swallowed them *all*. Thousands more, to the unknown Ending, will follow : and *thou* here, of this present one, hangest as a drop, still sungilt, on the giddy edge ; one moment, while the Darkness has not yet engulfed thee. O Brother ! is *that* what thou callest prosaic ; of small interest ? Of small interest and for *tbee* ? Awake, poor troubled sleeper : shake off thy torpid nightmare-dream ; look, see, behold it, the Flame-image ; splendours high as Heaven, terrors deep as Hell : this is

God's Creation ; this is Man's Life ! — Such things has the Writer of these lines witnessed, in this poor Nineteenth Century of ours ; and what are all such to the things he yet hopes to witness ? Hopes, with truest assurance. "I have painted so much," said the good Jean Paul, in his old days, "and I have never seen the Ocean ; the Ocean of Eternity I shall not fail to see ! "

Such being the intrinsic quality of this Time, and of all Time whatsoever, might not the Poet who chanced to walk through it find objects enough to paint ? What object soever he fixed on, were it the meanest of the mean, let him but paint it in its actual truth, as it swims there, in such environment ; world-old, yet new and never-ending ; an indestructible portion of the miraculous All, — his picture of it were a Poem. How much more if the object fixed on were not mean, but one already wonderful ; the mystic "actual truth" of which, if it lay not on the surface, yet shone through

the surface, and invited even Prosaists to search for it !

The present Writer, who unhappily belongs to that class, has nevertheless a firmer and firmer persuasion of two things : first, as was seen, that Romance exists ; secondly, that now, and formerly, and evermore it exists, strictly speaking, in Reality alone. The thing that *is*, what can be *so* wonderful ; what, especially to us that *are*, can have such significance ? Study Reality, he is ever and anon saying to himself ; search out deeper and deeper *its* quite endless mystery : see it, know it ; then, whether thou wouldst learn from it, and again teach ; or weep over it, or laugh over it, or love it, or despise it, or in any way relate thyself to it, thou hast the firmest enduring basis : *that* hieroglyphic page is one thou canst read on forever, find new meaning in forever.

Finally, and in a word, do not the critics teach us : "In whatsoever thing thou hast thyself felt interest, in that or in nothing

hope to inspire others with interest"? — In partial obedience to all which, and to many other principles, shall the following small Romance of the *Diamond Necklace* begin to come together. A small Romance, let the reader again and again assure himself, which is no brainweb of mine, or of any other foolish man's; but a fraction of that mystic "spirit-woven web," from the "Loom of Time," spoken of above. It is an actual Transaction that happened in this Earth of ours. Wherewith our whole business, as already urged, is to paint it truly.

For the rest, an earnest inspection, faithful endeavour has not been wanting, on our part; nor, singular as it may seem, the strictest regard to chronology, geography (or rather, in this case, topography), documentary evidence, and what else true historical research would yield. Were there but on the reader's part a kindred openness, a kindred spirit of endeavour! Beshone strongly, on both sides, by such united twofold Phi-

losophy, this poor opaque Intrigue of the *Diamond Necklace* might become quite translucent between us, transfigured, lifted up into the serene of Universal-History; and might hang there like a smallest Diamond Constellation, visible without telescope,— so long as it could.



CHAPTER II

THE NECKLACE IS MADE

MR. TELL, or as he is now called Monsieur, M. Boehmer, to all appearance wanted not that last infirmity of noble and ignoble minds — a love of fame; he was destined also to be famous more than enough. His outlooks into the world were rather of a smiling character; he has long since exchanged his guttural speech, as far as possible, for a nasal one; his rustic Saxon fatherland for a polished city of Paris, and thriven there. United in partnership with worthy Monsieur Bassange, a sound practical man, skilled in the valuation of all precious stones, in the management of workmen, in the judgment of their work, he already sees himself among the highest of his guild: nay, rather the very highest, — for he has secured, by purchase and hard

money paid, the title of King's Jeweller ; and can enter the Court itself, leaving all other Jewellers, and even innumerable Gentlemen, Gigmen, and small Nobility, to languish in the vestibule. With the costliest ornaments in his pocket, or borne after him by assiduous shopboys, the happy Boehmer sees high drawing-rooms and sacred *ruelles* fly open, as with talismanic *Sesame* ; and the brightest eyes of the whole world grow brighter : to him alone of men the Unapproachable reveals herself in mysterious *négligée* ; taking and giving counsel. Do not, on all gala-days and gala-nights, his works praise him ? On the gorgeous robes of State, on Court-dresses and Lords' stars, on the diadem of Royalty : better still, on the swan-neck of Beauty, and her queenly garniture from plume-bearing aigrette to shoe-buckle on fairy-slipper, — that blinding play of colours is Boehmer's doing : he is *Joaillier-Bijoutier de la Reine*.

Could the man have been content with it !

He could not: Icarus-like, he must mount too high; have his wax-wings melted, and descend prostrate,—amid a cloud of vain goose-quills. One day, a fatal day (of some year, probably among the *Seventies* of last Century), it struck Boehmer: Why should not I, who as Most Christian King's Jeweller, am properly first Jeweller of the Universe,—make a Jewel which the Universe has not matched? Nothing can prevent thee, Boehmer, if thou have the skill to do it. Skill or no skill, answers he, I have the ambition: my Jewel, if not the beautifullest, shall be the dearest. Thus was the Diamond Necklace determined on.

Did worthy Bassange give a willing, or a reluctant consent? In any case he consents; and coöperates. Plans are sketched, consultations held; stucco models made; by money or credit the costliest diamonds come in; cunning craftsmen cut them, set them: proud Boehmer sees the work go prosperously on. Proud man! Behold him on a

morning after breakfast: he has stepped down to the innermost workshop, before saluting out; stands there with his laced three-cornered hat, cane under arm; drawing-on his gloves: with nod, with nasal-guttural word, he gives judicious confirmation, judicious abnegation, censure, and approval. A still joy is dawning over that bland, blond face of his; he can think, while in many a sacred boudoir he visits the Unapproachable, that an *opus magnum*, of which the world wotteth not, is progressing. At length comes a morning when care has terminated, and joy can not only dawn but shine; the Necklace, which shall be famous and world-famous, is made.

Made we call it, in conformity with common speech, but properly it was not made; only, with more or less spirit of method, arranged and agglomerated. What spirit of method lay in it, might be made; nothing more. But to tell the various Histories of those various Diamonds from the first mak-

ing of them; or even, omitting all the rest, from the first digging of them in the far Indian mines! How they lay, for uncounted ages and æons (under the uproar and splashing of such Deucalion Deluges, and Hutton Explosions, with steam enough, and Werner Submersions), silently embedded in the rock; did nevertheless, when their hour came, emerge from it, and first behold the glorious Sun smile on them, and with their many-coloured glances smile back on him. How they served next, let us say, as eyes of Heathen Idols, and received worship. How they had then, by fortune of war or theft, been knocked out; and exchanged among camp-sutlers for a little spirituous liquor, and bought by Jews, and worn as signets on the fingers of tawny or white Majesties; and again been lost, with the fingers too, and perhaps life (as by Charles the Rash, among the mud-ditches of Nancy), in old-forgotten glorious victories: and so,—through innumerable varieties of for-

tune,—had come at last to the cutting-wheel of Boehmer; to be united, in strange fellowship, with comrades also blown together from all ends of the Earth, each with a history of its own! Could these aged stones, the youngest of them Six Thousand years of age and upwards, but have spoken, *there* were an Experience of Philosophy to teach by!—But now, as was said, by little caps of gold, and daintiest rings of the same, they are all being, so to speak, enlisted under Boehmer's flag,—made to take rank and file, in new order, no Jewel asking his neighbour whence he came; and parade there for a season. For a season only; and then— to disperse, and enlist anew *ad infinitum*. In such inexplicable wise are Jewels, and men also, and indeed all earthly things, jumbled together and asunder, and shovelled and wafted to and fro, in our inexplicable chaos of a World. This was what Boehmer called *making his Necklace*.

So, in fact, do other men speak, and with

even less reason. How many men, for example, hast thou heard talk of making money ; of making, say, a million and a half of money : Of which million and a half, how much, if one were to look into it, had they *made*? The accurate value of their Industry ; not a sixpence more. Their making, then, was but, like Boehmer's, a clutching and heaping together ; — by-and-by to be followed also by a dispersion. Made? Thou too vain individual ! were these towered ashlar edifices ; were these fair bounteous leas, with their bosky umbrages and yellow harvests ; and the sunshine that lights them from above, and the granite rocks and fire-reservoirs that support them from below, made by *tbee*? I think, by another. The very shilling that thou hast was dug, by man's force, in Carinthia and Paraguay ; smelted sufficiently ; and stamped, as would seem, not without the advice of our late Defender of the Faith, his Majesty George the Fourth. Thou hast it, and holdest it ;

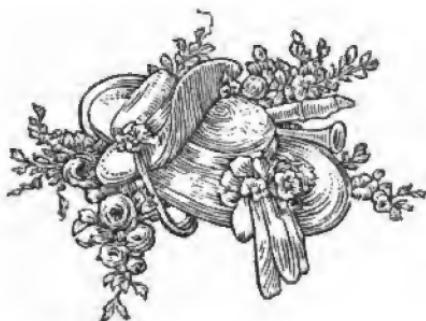
but whether, or in what sense, thou hast *made* any farthing of it, thyself canst not say. If the courteous reader ask, What things, then, are made by man? I will answer him, Very few, indeed. A Heroism, a Wisdom (a god-given Volition that has realized itself), is made now and then: for example, some five or six Books, since the Creation, have been made. Strange that there are not more: for surely every encouragement is held out. Could I, or thou, happy reader, but make one, the world would let us keep it unstolen for Fourteen whole years,—and take what we could get for it.

But, in a word, Monsieur Boehmer has made his Necklace, what he calls made it: happy man is he. From a Drawing, as large as reality, kindly furnished by “Tau-nay, Printseller, of the Rue d’Enfer”; and again, in late years, by the Abbé Georgel, in the Second Volume of his “*Mémoires*” curious readers can still fancy to themselves what a princely Ornament it was. A row

of seventeen glorious diamonds, as large almost as filberts, encircle, not too tightly, the neck, a first time. Looser, gracefully fastened thrice to these, a three-wreathed festoon, and pendants enough (simple pear-shaped, multiple star-shaped, or clustering amorphous) encircle it, enwreath it, a second time. Loosest of all, softly flowing round from behind in priceless catenary, rush down two broad threefold rows ; seem to knot themselves, round a very Queen of Diamonds, on the bosom ; then rush on, again separated, as if there were length in plenty ; the very tassels of them were a fortune for some men. And now lastly, two other inexpressible threefold rows, also with their tassels, will, when the Necklace is on and clasped, unite themselves behind into a doubly inexpressible *six*fold row ; and so stream down, together or asunder, over the hind-neck, — we may fancy, like lambent Zodiacial or Aurora-Borealis fire.

All these on a neck of snow slight-tinged

with rose-bloom, and within it royal Life: amidst the blaze of lustres; in sylphish movements, espiègleries, coquetteries, and minuet-mazes; with every movement a flash of star-rainbow colours, bright almost as the movements of the fair young soul it emblems! A glorious ornament; fit only for the Sultana of the World. Indeed, only attainable by such; for it is valued at 1,800,000 livres; say in round numbers, and sterling money, between eighty and ninety thousand pounds.



CHAPTER III

THE NECKLACE CANNOT BE SOLD

MISCALCULATING Boehmer. The Sultana of the Earth shall never wear that Necklace of thine ; no neck, either royal or vassal, shall ever be the lovelier for it. In the present distressed state of our finances, with the American War raging round us, where thinkest thou are eighty thousand pounds to be raised for such a thing ? In this hungry world, thou fool, these five hundred and odd Diamonds, good only for looking at, are intrinsically worth less to us than a string of as many dry Irish potatoes, on which a famishing Sans-culotte might fill his belly. Little knowest thou, laughing Joaillier-Bijoutier, great in thy pride of place, in thy pride of *savoir-faire*, what the world has in store for thee. Thou laughest there ; by-and-by thou

wilt laugh on the wrong side of thy face mainly.

While the Necklace lay in stucco effigy, and the stones of it were still “circulating in Commerce,” Du Barry’s was the neck it was meant for. Unhappily, as all dogs, male and female, have but their day, her day is done; and now (so busy has Death been) she sits retired, on mere half-pay, without prospects, at Saint-Cyr. A generous France will buy no more neck-ornaments for *ber*:—O Heaven! the Guillotine-axe is already forging (North, in Swedish Dalecarlia, by sledge-hammers and fire; South, too, by taxes and *tailles*) that will shear her neck in twain!

But, indeed, what of Du Barry? A foul worm; hatched by royal heat, on foul composts, into a flaunting butterfly; now dis-winged, and again a worm! Are there not Kings’ Daughters and Kings’ Consorts; is not Decoration the first wish of a female heart,—often also, if such heart is empty,

the last? The Portuguese Ambassador is here, and his rigorous Pombal is no longer Minister: there is an Infanta in Portugal, purposing by Heaven's blessing to wed. — Singular! the Portuguese Ambassador, though without fear of Pombal, praises, but will not purchase.

Or why not our own loveliest Marie-Antoinette, once Dauphiness only; now every inch a Queen: what neck in the whole Earth would it beseem better? It is fit only for her.—Alas, Boehmer! King Louis has an eye for diamonds; but he, too, is without overplus of money: his high Queen herself answers queenlike, “We have more need of Seventy-fours than of Necklaces.” *Laudatur et alget!* — Not without a qualmish feeling, we apply next to the Queen and King of the Two Sicilies. In vain, O Boehmer! In crowned heads there is no hope for thee. Not a crowned head of them can spare the eighty thousand pounds. The age of Chivalry is gone, and that of Bankruptcy

is come. A dull, deep, presaging movement rocks all thrones: Bankruptcy is beating down the gate, and no Chancellor can longer barricade her out. She will enter; and the shoreless fire-lava of DEMOCRACY is at her back! Well may Kings, a second time, "sit still with awful eye," and think of far other things than Necklaces.

Thus for poor Boehmer are the mournfullest days and nights appointed; and this high-promising year (1780, as we laboriously guess and gather) stands blacker than all others in his calendar. In vain shall he, on his sleepless pillow, more and more desperately revolve the problem; it is a problem of the insoluble sort, a true "irreducible case of Cardan": the Diamond Necklace will not sell.



CHAPTER IV

AFFINITIES: THE TWO FIXED-IDEAS

NEVER THE LESS, a man's little Work lies not isolated, stranded; a whole busy World, a whole native-element of mysterious never-resting Force, environs it; will catch it up; will carry it forward, or else backward: always, infallibly, either as living growth, or at worst as well-rotted manure, the Thing Done will come to use. Often, accordingly, for a man that had finished any little work, this were the most interesting question In such a boundless whirl of a world, what hook will it be, and what hooks, that shall catch up this little work of mine; and whirl *it* also, — through such a dance? A question, we need not say, which, in the simplest of cases, would bring the whole Royal Society to a non-plus. — Good Corsican Letitia! while thou nursest

thy little Napoleon, and he answers thy mother-smile with those deep eyes of his, a world-famous French Revolution, with Federations of the Champ de Mars, and September Massacres, and Bakers' Customers *en queue*, is getting ready: many a Danton and Desmoulins; prim-visaged, Tartuffe-looking Robespierre, as yet all schoolboys; and Marat weeping bitter rheum, as he pounds horse-drugs,— are preparing the fittest arena for him!

Thus, too, while poor Boehmer is busy with those Diamonds of his, picking them “out of Commerce,” and his craftsmen are grinding and setting them; a certain ecclesiastical Coadjutor and Grand Almoner, and prospective Commendator and Cardinal, is in Austria, hunting and giving suppers; for whom mainly it is that Boehmer and his craftsmen so employ themselves. Strange enough, once more! The foolish Jeweller at Paris, making foolish trinkets; the foolish Ambassador at Vienna, making blunders

and debaucheries: these Two, all uncommunicating, wide asunder as the Poles, are hourly forging for each other the wonderfullest hook-and-eye; which will hook them together, one day,— into artificial Siamese-Twins, for the astonishment of mankind.

Prince Louis de Rohan is one of those select mortals born to honours, as the sparks fly upwards; and, alas, also (as all men are) to troubles no less. Of his genesis and descent much might be said, by the curious in such matters; yet, perhaps, if we weigh it well, intrinsically little. He can, by diligence and faith, be traced back some hand-breadth or two, some century or two; but after that, merges in the mere “blood-royal of Brittany”; long, long on this side of the Northern Immigrations, he is not so much as to be sought for;— and leaves the whole space onwards from that, into the bosom of Eternity, a blank, marked only by one point, the Fall of Man! However, and what alone

concerns us, his kindred, in these quite recent times, have been much about the Most Christian Majesty ; could there pick up what was going. In particular, they have had a turn of some continuance for Cardinalship and Commendatorship. Safest trades these, of the calm, do-nothing sort : in the do-something line, in Generalship, or such like (witness poor Cousin Soubise, at Rosbach), they might not fare so well. In any case, the actual Prince Louis, Coadjutor at Strasburg, while his uncle the Cardinal-Archbishop has not yet deceased, and left him his dignities, but only fallen sick, already takes his place on one grandest occasion : he, thrice-happy Coadjutor, receives the fair, young, trembling Dauphiness, Marie-Antoinette, on her first entrance into France ; and can there, as Ceremonial Fugleman, with fit bearing and semblance (being a tall man, of six-and-thirty), do the needful. Of his other performances up to this date, a refined History had rather say nothing.

In fact, if the tolerating mind will meditate it with any sympathy, what could poor Rohan perform? Performing needs light, needs strength, and a firm clear footing; all of which had been denied him. Nourished, from birth, with the choicest physical spoon-meat, indeed; yet also, with no better spiritual Doctrine and Evangel of Life than a French Court of Louis the Well-beloved could yield; gifted, moreover, and this too was but a new perplexity for him, with shrewdness enough to see through much, with vigour enough to despise much; unhappily, not with vigour enough to spurn it from him, and be forever enfranchised of it,—he awakes, at man's stature, with man's wild desires, in a World of the merest incoherent Lies and Delirium; himself a nameless Mass of delirious Incoherences,—covered over at most, and held in little, by conventional Politesse, and a Cloak of prospective Cardinal's Plush. Are not intrigues, might Rohan say, the industry of

this our Universe; nay, is not the Universe itself, at bottom, properly an intrigue? A Most Christian Majesty, in the Parc-aux-cerfs; he, thou seest, is the god of this lower world; in the fight of Life, our war-banner and celestial *En-touto-nika* is a Strumpet's Petticoat: these are thy gods, O France!—What, in such singular circumstances, could poor Rohan's creed and world-theory be, that he should "perform" thereby? Atheism? Alas, no; not even Atheism: only Machiavellism; and the indestructible faith that "ginger is hot in the mouth." Get ever new and better *ginger*, therefore; chew it ever the more diligently: 't is all thou hast to look to, and that only for a day.

Ginger enough, poor Louis de Rohan: too much of ginger! Whatsoever of it, for the five senses, money, or money's worth, or backstairs diplomacy, can buy; nay, for the sixth sense, too, the far spicier ginger, Antecedence of thy fellow-creatures,—

merited, at least, by infinitely finer housing than theirs. Coadjutor of Strasburg, Archbishop of Strasburg, Grand Almoner of France, Commander of the Order of the Holy Ghost, Cardinal Commendator of St. Wast d'Arras (one of the fattest benefices here below): all these shall be housings for Monseigneur: to all these shall his Jesuit Nursing-mother, our vulpine Abbé Geor-gel, through fair court-weather and through foul, triumphantly bear him; and wrap him with them, fat, somnolent Nursling as he is.—By the way, a most assiduous, ever-wakeful Abbé is this Georgel; and wholly Monseigneur's. He has scouts dim-flying, far out, in the great deep of the world's business; has spider-threads that overnet the whole world; himself sits in the centre, ready to run. In vain shall King and Queen combine against Monseigneur: "I was at M. de Maurepas' pillow before six,"—persuasively wagging my sleek coif, and the sleek reynard-head under it; I managed it

all for him. Here, too, on occasion of Reynard Georgel, we could not but reflect what a singular species of creature your Jesuit must have been. Outwardly, you would say, a man; the smooth semblance of a man: inwardly, to the centre, filled with stone! Yet in all breathing things, even in stone Jesuits, are inscrutable sympathies: how else does a Reynard Abbé so loyally give himself, soul and body, to a somnolent Monseigneur;— how else does the poor Tit, to the neglect of its own eggs and interests, nurse up a huge lumbering Cuckoo; and think its pains all paid, if the soot-brown Stupidity will merely grow bigger and bigger!— Enough, by Jesuitic or other means, Prince Louis de Rohan shall be passively kneaded and baked into Commendator of St. Wast and much else; and truly *such* a Commendator as hardly, since King Thierri, first of the *Fainéans*, founded that Establishment, has played his part there.

Such, however, have Nature and Art combined together to make Prince Louis. A figure thrice-clothed with honours; with plush, and civic and ecclesiastic garniture of all kinds; but in itself little other than an amorphous congeries of contradictions, somnolence and violence, foul passions and foul habits. It is by his plush cloaks and wrappings mainly, as above hinted, that such a figure sticks together: what we call "coheres," in any measure; were it not for these, he would flow out boundlessly on all sides. Conceive him farther, with a kind of radical vigour and fire, for he can see clearly at times, and speak fiercely; yet left in this way to stagnate and ferment, and lie overlaid with such floods of fat material: have we not a true image of the shame-fullest Mud-volcano, gurgling and sluttishly simmering, amid continual steamy indistinctness,— except as was hinted, in *wind-gusts*; with occasional terrifico-absurd mud-explosions!

This, garnish it and fringe it never so handsomely, is, alas, the intrinsic character of Prince Louis. A shameful spectacle: such, however, as the world has beheld many times; as it were to be wished, but is not yet to be hoped, the world might behold no more. Nay, are not all possible delirious incoherences, outward and inward, summed up, for poor Rohan, in this one incrediblest incoherence, that *be*, Prince Louis de Rohan, is named Priest, Cardinal of the Church? A debauched, merely libidinous mortal, lying there quite helpless, dissolute (as we well say); whom to see Church *Cardinal*, symbolical *Hinge* or main Corner of the Invisible Holy in this World, an Inhabitant of Saturn might split with laughing,—if he did not rather swoon with pity and horror!

Prince Louis, as ceremonial fugleman at Strasburg, might have hoped to make some way with the fair young Dauphiness; but seems not to have made any. Perhaps, in

those great days, so trying for a fifteen-years Bride and Dauphiness, the fair Antoinette was too preoccupied: perhaps, in the very face and looks of Prospective-Cardinal Prince Louis, her fair young soul read, all unconsciously, an incoherent *Roué*-ism, bottomless Mud-volcanoism; from which she by instinct rather recoiled.

However, as above hinted, he is now gone, in these years, on Embassy to Vienna: with "four-and-twenty pages" (if our remembrance of Abbé Georgel serve) "of noble birth," all in scarlet breeches; and such a retinue and parade as drowns even his fat revenue in perennial debt. Above all things, his Jesuit Familiar is with him. For so everywhere they must manage: Eminence Rohan is the cloak, Jesuit Georgel the man or automaton within it. Rohan, indeed, sees Poland a-partitioning; or rather Georgel, with his "masked Austrian" traitor "on the ramparts," sees it for him: but

what can he do? He exhibits his four-and-twenty scarlet pages, — who, we find, “smuggle” to quite unconscionable lengths; rides through a Catholic procession, Prospective-Cardinal though he be, because it is too long and keeps him from an appointment; hunts, gallants; gives suppers, Sardanapalus-wise, the finest ever seen in Vienna. Abbé Georgel, as we fancy it was, writes a Despatch in his name “every fortnight”; — mentions, in one of these, that “Maria Theresa stands, indeed, with the handkerchief in one hand, weeping for the woes of Poland; but with the sword in the other hand, ready to cut Poland in sections, and take her share.” Untimely joke; which proved to Prince Louis the root of unspeakable chagrins! For Minister D’Aiguillon (much against his duty) communicates the Letter to King Louis; Louis to Du Barry, to season her *souper*, and laughs over it; the thing becomes a Court joke; the filially-pious Dauphiness hears it, and

remembers it. Accounts go, moreover, that Rohan spake censoringly of the Dauphiness to her mother: this probably is but hearsay and false; the devout Maria Theresa disliked him, and even despised him, and vigorously laboured for his recall.

Thus, in rosy sleep and somnambulism, or awake only to quaff the full wine-cup of the Scarlet Woman his Mother, and again sleep and somnambulate, does the Prospective-Cardinal and Commendator pass his days. Unhappy man! This is not a world which was made in sleep; which it is safe to sleep and somnambulate in. In that "loud-roaring Loom of Time" (where above nine hundred millions of hungry Men, for one item, restlessly weave and work), so many threads fly humming from their "eternal spindles"; and swift invisible shuttles, far darting, to the Ends of the World,—complex enough! At this hour, a miserable Boehmer in Paris, whom thou wottest not of, is spinning, of diamonds and gold, a

paltry thrum that will go nigh to strangle
the life out of thee.

Meanwhile, Louis the Well-beloved has left, forever, his Parc-aux-cerfs; and, amid the scarce-suppressed hootings of the world, taken up his last lodging at Saint-Denis. Feeling that it was all over (for the small-pox has the victory, and even Du Barry is off), he, as the Abbé Georgel records, "made the *amende honorable* to God" (these are his Reverence's own words); had a true repentance of three days' standing; and so, continues the Abbé, "fell asleep in the Lord." Asleep in the Lord, Monsieur l'Abbé! If such a mass of Laziness and Lust fell asleep in the Lord, *wbo*, fanciest thou, is it that falls asleep — elsewhere? Enough that he did fall asleep; that thick-wrapt in the Blanket of the Night, under what keeping we ask not, *be* never through endless Time can, for his own or our sins, insult the face of the Sun any more; — and so now we go

onward, if not to less degrees of beastliness, yet, at least and worst, to cheering varieties of it.

Louis XVI therefore reigns (and, under the Sieur Gamain, makes locks) ; his fair Dauphiness has become a Queen. Eminence Rohan is home from Vienna ; to condole and congratulate. He bears a letter from Maria Theresa ; hopes the Queen will not forget old Ceremonial Fuglemen, and friends of the Dauphiness. Heaven and Earth ! The Dauphiness Queen will not see him ; orders the Letter to be *sent* her. The King himself signifies briefly that he “will be asked for when wanted !”

Alas ! at Court, our motion is the delicatest, unsurest. We go spinning, as it were, on teetotums, by the edges of bottomless deeps. Rest is fall ; so is one false whirl. A moment ago, Eminence Rohan seemed waltzing with the best : but, behold, his teetotum has *carried him over* ; there is an inversion of the centre of gravity ; and so

now, heels uppermost, velocity increasing as the time, space as the square of the time, — he rushes.

On a man of poor Rohan's somnolence and violence, the sympathising mind can estimate what the effect was. Consternation, stupefaction, the total jumble of blood, brains, and nervous spirits ; in ear and heart, only universal hubbub and louder and louder singing of the agitated air. A fall comparable to that of Satan ! Men have, indeed, been driven from Court ; and borne it, according to ability. Choiseul, in these very years, retired Parthianlike, with a smile or scowl ; and drew half the Court-host along with him. Our Wolsey, though once an *Ego et Rex meus*, could journey, it is said, without strait-waistcoat, to his monastery ; and there, telling beads, look forward to a still longer journey. The melodious, too soft-strung Racine, when his King turned his back on him, emitted one meek wail, and submissively — died. But the case of

Coadjutor de Rohan differed from all these. No loyalty was in him, that he should die; no self-help, that he should live; no faith, that he should tell beads. His is a mud-volcanic character; incoherent, mad, from the very foundation of it. Think, too, that his Courtiership (for how could any nobleness enter there?) was properly a gambling speculation: the loss of his trump Queen of Hearts can bring nothing but flat, unredeemed despair. No other game has he, in this world, — or in the next. And then the exasperating *Why?* The *How came it?* For that Rohanic, or Georgelic, sprightliness of the “handkerchief in one hand, and sword in the other,” if, indeed, that could have caused it all, has quite escaped him. In the name of Friar Bacon’s Head, *what* was it? Imagination, with Desperation to drive her, may fly to all points of Space; — and returns with wearied wings, and no tidings. Behold *me bere*: this, which is the first grand certainty for man in general, is the

first and last and only one for poor Rohan. And then his *Here!* Alas, looking upwards, he can eye, from his burning marl, the azure realms, once his ; and Cousin Countess de Marsan, and so many Richelieus, Polignacs, and other happy angels, male and female, all blissfully gyrating there ; while he —— !

Nevertheless hope, in the human breast, though not in the diabolic, springs eternal. The outcast Rohan bends all his thoughts, faculties, prayers, purposes, to one object ; one object he will attain, or go to Bedlam. How many ways he tries ; what days and nights of conjecture, consultation ; what written unpublished reams of correspondence, protestation, backstairs diplomacy of every rubric ! How many suppers has he eaten ; how many given, — in vain ! It is his morning song, and his evening prayer. From innumerable falls he rises ; only to fall again. Behold him even, with his red stockings, at dusk, in the Garden of Trianon :

he has bribed the Concierge; will see her Majesty in spite of Etiquette and Fate; peradventure, pitying his long sad King's-evil, she will touch him and heal him. In vain,—saysthe Female Historian,Campan. The Chariot of Majesty shoots rapidly by, with high-plumed heads in it; Eminence is known by his red stockings, but not looked at, only laughed at, and left standing like a Pillar of Salt. Thus through ten long years, of new resolve and new despondency, of flying from Saverne to Paris, and from Paris to Saverne, has it lasted; hope deferred making the heart sick. Reynard Georgel and Cousin de Marsan, by eloquence, by influence, and being “at M. de Maurepas’ pillow before six,” have secured the Arch-bishopric, the Grand Almonership; the Cardinalship (by the medium of Poland); and, lastly, to tinker many rents, and appease the Jews, that fattest Commendatorship, founded by King Thierri the Do-nothing —perhaps with a view to such cases. All

good! languidly croaks Rohan; yet all not the one thing needful; alas, the Queen's eyes do not yet shine on me.

Abbé Georgel admits, in his own polite diplomatic way, that the Mud-volcano was much agitated by these trials; and in time quite changed. Monseigneur deviated into cabalistic courses, after elixirs, philtres, and the philosopher's stone; that is, the volcanic steam grew thicker and heavier: at last by Cagliostro's magic (for Cagliostro and the Cardinal by elective affinity must meet), it sank into the opacity of perfect London fog! So, too, if Monseigneur grew choleric, wrapped himself up in reserve, spoke roughly to his domestics and dependents,—were not the terrifico-absurd mud-explosions becoming more frequent? Alas, what wonder? Some nine-and-forty winters have now fled over his Eminence (for it is 1783), and his beard falls white to the shaver; but age for him brings no "benefit of experience." He is possessed by a fixed-idea!

Foolish Eminence ! is the Earth grown all barren and of a snuff colour, because one pair of eyes in it look on thee askance ? Surely thou hast thy Body there yet : and what of soul might from the first reside in it. Nay, a warm, snug Body, with not only five senses (sound still, in spite of much tear and wear), but most eminent clothing, besides ; — clothed with authority over much, with red Cardinal's cloak, red Cardinal's hat; with Commendatorship, Grand-Almonership, so kind have thy Fripiers been ; with dignities and dominions too tedious to name. The stars rise nightly, with tidings (for thee too, if thou wilt listen) from the infinite Blue; Sun and Moon bring vicissitudes of season ; dressing green, with flower-borderings, and cloth of gold, this ancient ever-young Earth of ours, and filling her breasts with all-nourishing mother's milk. Wilt thou work ? The whole Encyclopædia (not Diderot's only, but the Almighty's) is there for thee to spread thy

broad faculty upon. Or, if thou have no faculty, no Sense, hast thou not, as already suggested, Senses, to the number of five? What victuals thou wishest, command; with what wine savoureth thee, be filled. Already thou art a false, lascivious Priest; with revenues of, say, a quarter of a million sterling; and no mind to mend. Eat, foolish Eminence; eat with voracity,—leaving the shot till *afterwards!* In all this the eyes of Marie-Antoinette can neither help thee nor hinder.

And yet, what is the Cardinal, dissolute and mud-volcano though he be, more foolish herein, than all Sons of Adam? Give the wisest of us once a “fixed-idea,”—which, though a temporary madness, who has not had?—and see where his wisdom is! The Chamois-hunter serves his doomed seven years in the Quicksilver Mines; returns salivated to the marrow of the backbone; and next morning—goes forth to hunt again. Behold Cardalion King of Uri-

nals ; with a woeful ballad to his mistress's eyebrow ! He blows out, Werter-wise, his foolish existence, because *she* will not have it to keep ;—heeds not that there are some five hundred millions of other mistresses in this noble Planet ; most likely much such as she. O foolish men ! They sell their Inheritance (as their Mother did hers), though it is Paradise, for a crotchet : will they not, in every age, dare not only grapeshot and gallows-ropes, but Hell-fire itself, for better sauce to their victuals ? My friends, beware of fixed-ideas.

Here, accordingly, is poor Boehmer with one in his head, too ! He has been hawking his “irreducible case of Cardan,” that Necklace of his, these three long years, through all Palaces and Ambassadors’ Hotels, over the old “nine Kingdoms,” or more of them than there now are : searching, sifting Earth, Sea, and Air, for a customer. To take his Necklace in pieces ; and so, losing only his manual labour and expected glory, dissolve

his fixed-idea, and fixed-diamonds, into current ones : this were simply casting out the Devil — from himself ; a miracle, and perhaps more ! For he, too, has a Devil, or Devils : one mad object that he strives at ; that he, too, will attain, or go to Bedlam. Creditors, snarling, hound him on from without; mocked Hopes, lost Labours, bear-bait him from within : to these torments his fixed-idea keeps him chained. In six-and-thirty weary revolutions of the Moon, was it wonderful the man's brain had got dried a little ?

Behold, one day, being Court-Jeweller, he, too, bursts, almost as Rohan had done, into the Queen's retirement, or apartment; flings himself (as Campan again has recorded) at her Majesty's feet ; and there, with clasped uplifted hands, in passionate nasal-gutturals, with streaming tears and loud sobs, entreats her to do one of two things : Either to buy his necklace ; or else graciously to vouchsafe him her royal

permission to drown himself in the River Seine. Her Majesty, pitying the distracted, bewildered state of the man, calmly points out the plain third course: *Dépêcez votre Collier*, Take your Necklace in pieces;— adding withal, in a tone of queenly rebuke, that if he would drown himself, he at all times could, without her furtherance.

Ah, *bad* he drowned himself, with the Necklace in his pocket; and Cardinal Commendator at his skirts! Kings, above all, beautiful Queens, as far-radiant Symbols on the pinnacles of the world, are so exposed to madmen. Should these two fixed-ideas that beset this beautiful Queen, and almost burst through her Palace-walls, one day *unite*, and this *not* to jump into the River Seine:— what maddest result may be looked for!



CHAPTER V

THE ARTIST

IF the reader has hitherto, in our too
figurative language, seen only the figurative hook and the figurative eye, which Boehmer and Rohan, far apart, were respectively fashioning for each other, he shall now see the cunning Milliner (an actual, unmetaphorical *Milliner*) by whom these two individuals, with their two implements, are brought in contact, and hooked together into stupendous artificial Siamese-Twins ; — after which the whole nodus and solution will naturally combine and unfold itself.

Jeanne de Saint-Remi, by courtesy or otherwise, Countess styled also of *Valois*, and even of *France*, has now, in this year of Grace 1783, known the world for some seven-and-twenty summers; and had crooks

in her lot. She boasts herself descended, by what is called *natural* generation, from the Blood-Royal of France: Henri Second, before that fatal tourney-lance entered his right eye and ended him, appears to have had, successively or simultaneously, four—unmentionable women: and so, *in vice* of the third of these, came a certain Henri de Saint-Remi into this world; and, as High and Puissant Lord, ate his victuals and spent his days, on an allotted domain of Fontette, near Bar-sur-Aube, in Champagne. Of High and Puissant Lords, at this Fontette, six other generations followed; and thus ultimately, in a space of some two centuries, —succeeded in realizing this brisk little Jeanne de Saint-Remi, here in question. But, ah, what a falling-off! The Royal Family of France has well-nigh forgotten its left-hand collaterals: the last High and Puissant Lord (much clipt by his predecessors), falling into drink, and left by a scandalous world to drink his pitcher *dry*,

had to alienate by degrees his whole worldly Possessions, down almost to the indispensable, or inexpressibles; and die at last in the Paris Hôtel-Dieu ; glad that it was not on the street. So that he has, indeed, given a sort of bastard royal life to little Jeanne, and her little brother ; but not the smallest earthly provender to keep it in. The mother, in her extremity, forms the wonderfullest connections ; and little Jeanne, and her little brother, go out into the highways to beg.

A charitable Countess Boulainvilliers, struck with the little bright-eyed tatterdemalion from the carriage-window, picks her up ; has her scoured, clothed ; and rears her, in her fluctuating, miscellaneous way, to be, about the age of twenty, a nondescript of Mantuamaker, Soubrette, Court-beggar, Fine-lady, Abigail, and Scion-of-Royalty. Sad combination of trades ! The Court, after infinite soliciting, puts one off with a hungry dole of little more than thirty pounds a-year. Nay, the audacious Count Boulainvilliers

dares, with what purposes he knows best, to offer some suspicious presents ! Whereupon his good Countess, especially as Mantuamaking languishes, thinks it could not but be fit to go down to Bar-sur-Aube ; and there see whether no fractions of that alienated Fontette Property, held perhaps on insecure tenure, may, by terror or cunning, be recoverable. Burning her paper patterns, pocketing her pension till more come, Mademoiselle Jeanne sallies out thither, in her twenty-third year.

Nourished in this singular way, alternating between saloon and kitchen-table, with the loftiest of pretensions, meanest of possessions, our poor High and Puissant Mantuamaker has realized for herself a "face not beautiful, yet with a certain piquancy"; dark hair, blue eyes; and a character, which the present Writer, a determined student of human nature, declares to be undecipherable. Let the Psychologists try it ! Jeanne de-Saint-Remi de Valois de France actually

lived, and worked, and was: she has even published, at various times, three considerable Volumes of Autobiography, with loose Leaves (in Courts of Justice) of unknown number; wherein he that runs may read, —but not understand. Strange Volumes! more like the screeching of distracted night-birds (suddenly disturbed by the torch of Police-Fowlers) than the articulate utterance of a rational unfeathered biped. Cheerfully admitting these statements to be all lies; we ask, How any mortal could, or should, *so* lie?

The Psychologists, however, commit one sore mistake; that of searching, in every character named human, for something like a conscience. Being mere contemplative recluses, for most part, and feeling that Morality is the heart of Life, they judge that with all the world it is so. Nevertheless, as practical men are aware, Life can go on in excellent vigour, without crotchet of that kind. What is the essence of Life? Voli-

tion? Go deeper down, you find a much more universal root and characteristic: Digestion. While Digestion lasts, Life cannot, in philosophical language, be said to be extinct: and Digestion will give rise to Volitions enough; at any rate, to Desires and attempts, which may pass for such. He who looks neither before nor after, any farther than the Larder and Stateroom, which latter is properly the finest compartment of the Larder, will need no World-theory, Creed as it is called, or Scheme of Duties; lightly leaving the world to wag as it likes with any theory or none, his grand object is a theory and practice of ways and means. Not goodness or badness is the type of him: only shiftiness or shiftlessness.

And now, disburdened of this obstruction, let the Psychologists consider it under a bolder view. Consider the brisk Jeanne de Saint-Remi de Saint-Shifty as a Spark of vehement Life, not developed into Will of any kind, yet fully into Desires of all

kinds, and cast into such a Life-element as we have seen. Vanity and Hunger; a Princess of the Blood, yet whose father had sold his inexpressibles; uncertain whether foster-daughter of a fond Countess, with hopes sky-high, or supernumerary Soubrette; with not enough of mantuamaking: in a word, *Gigmania disgagged*; one of the saddest, pitiable, unpitied predicaments of man! She is of that light unreflecting class, of that light unreflecting *sex varium semper et mutabile*. And then her Fine-ladyism, though a purseless one: capricious, coquettish, and with all the finer sensibilities of the heart; now in the rackets, now in the sullens; vivid in contradictory resolves; laughing, weeping, without reason,—though these acts are said to be signs of reason. Consider, too, how she has had to work her way, all along, by flattery and cajolery; wheedling, eavesdropping, namby-pambying: how she needs wages, and knows no other productive trades. Thought can hardly be said

to exist in her: only Perception and Device. With an understanding lynx-eyed for the surface of things, but which pierces beyond the surface of nothing; every individual thing (for she has never seized the heart of it) turns up a new face to her every new day, and seems a thing changed, a different thing. Thus sits, or rather vehemently bobs and hovers her vehement mind, in the middle of a boundless many-dancing whirlpool of gilt-shreds, paper-clippings, and windfalls,— to which the revolving chaos of my Uncle Toby's Smoke-jack was solidity and regularity. Reader! thou for thy sins must have met with such fair Irrationals; fascinating, with their lively eyes, with their quick snappish fancies; distinguished in the higher circles, in Fashion, even in Literature: they hum and buzz there, on graceful film-wings;—searching, nevertheless, with the wonderfullest skill, for honey; “*untamable as flies!*”

Wonderfullest skill for honey, we say;

and, pray, mark that, as regards this Countess de Saint-Shifty. Her instinct-of-genius is prodigious; her appetite fierce. In any foraging speculation of the private kind, she, unthinking as you call her, will be worth a hundred thinkers. And so of such untamable flies the untamablest, Mademoiselle Jeanne, is now buzzing down, in the Bar-sur-Aube Diligence; to inspect the honey-jars of Fontette; and see and smell whether there be any flaws in them.

Alas, at Fontette, we can, with sensibility, behold straw-roofs we were nursed under; farmers courteously offer cooked milk, and other country messes: but no soul will part with his Landed Property, for which, though cheap, he declares hard money was paid. The honey-jars are all close, then? — However, a certain Monsieur de Lamotte, a tall Gendarme, home on furlough from Lunéville, is now at Bar; pays us attentions; becomes quite particular in his attentions,— for we have a face “with

a certain piquancy," the liveliest glib-snap-pish tongue, the liveliest kittenish manner (not yet hardened into *cat*-hood), with thirty pounds a-yeár, and prospects. M. de Lamotte, indeed, is as yet only a private sentinel; but then a private sentinel in the *Gendarmes*: and did not his father die fighting "at the head of his company," at Minden? Why not in virtue of our own Countesship dub him, too, Count; by left-hand collateralism, get him advanced?— Finished before the furlough is done! The untamablest of flies has again buzzed off; in wedlock with M. de Lamotte; if not to get honey, yet to escape spiders; and so lies in garrison at Lunéville, amid coquettres and hysterics, in Gigmania disengaged,— disconsolate enough.

At the end of four long years (too long), M. de Lamotte, or call him now *Count* de Lamotte, sees good to lay down his fighting-gear (unhappily still only the musket), and become what is by certain moderns called

“ a Civilian ” : not a Civil-Law Doctor ; merely a Citizen, one who does not live by being killed. Alas ! cold eclipse has all along hung over the Lamotte household. Countess Boulainvilliers, it is true, writes in the most feeling manner ; but then the Royal Finances are so deranged ! Without personal pressing solicitation, on the spot, no Court-solicitor, were his pension the meagrest, can hope to better it. At Lunéville the sun, indeed, shines ; and there is a kind of Life ; but only an un-Parisian, half or quarter Life ; the very tradesmen grow clamorous, and no cunningly devised fable, ready-money alone will appease them. Commandant Marquis d'Autichamp agrees with Madame Boulainvilliers that a journey to Paris were the project ; whither, also, he himself is just going. Perfidious Commandant Marquis ! His plan is seen through : he dares to presume to make love to a Scion-of-Royalty ; or to hint that he could dare to presume to do it ! Where-

upon, indignant Count de Lamotte, as we said, throws up his commission, and down his fire-arms, without further delay. The King loses a tall private sentinel; the World has a new black-leg: and Monsieur and Madame de Lamotte take places in the Diligence for Strasburg.

Good Foster-Mother Boulainvilliers, however, is no longer at Strasburg: she is forward at the Archiepiscopal Palace in Saverne; on a visit there, to his Eminence Cardinal Commendator, Grand-Almoner, Archbishop Prince Louis de Rohan! Thus, then, has Destiny at last brought it about. Thus, after long wanderings, on paths so far separate, has the time come, in this late year 1783, when, of all the nine hundred millions of the Earth's denizens, these preappointed Two behold each other!

The foolish Cardinal, since no sublunary means, not even bribing of the Trianon Concierge, will serve, has taken to the superlunary: he is here, with his fixed-idea

and volcanic vaporosity darkening, under Cagliostro's management, into thicker and thicker opaque, — of the Black-Art itself. To the glance of hungry genius, Cardinal and Cagliostro could not but have meaning. A flush of astonishment, a sigh over boundless wealth (for the mountains of debt lie invisible) in the hands of boundless Stupidity; some vague looming of indefinite hope: all this one can well fancy. But alas, what, to a high plush Cardinal, is a now insolvent Scion-of-Royalty, — though with a face of some piquancy? The good Foster-Mother's visit, in any case, can last but three days; then, amid old namby-pambyings, with effusions of the nobler sensibilities and tears of pity at least for one's self, Countess de Lamotte, and husband, must off with her to Paris, and new possibilities at Court. Only when the sky again darkens, can this vague looming from Saverne look out, by fits, as a cheering weather-sign.

CHAPTER VI

WILL THE TWO FIXED-IDEAS UNITE?

THE EVER, the sky, according to
old custom, is not long in darkening again. The King's finances, we repeat, are in so distracted a state! No D'Ormesson, no Joly de Fleury, wearied with milking the already dry, will increase that scandalous Thirty Pounds of a Scion-of-Royalty by a single doit. Calonne himself, who has a willing ear and encouraging word for all mortals whatsoever, only with difficulty, and by aid of Madame of France, raises it to some still miserable Sixty-five. Worst of all, the good Foster-Mother Boulainvilliers, in few months, suddenly dies: the wretched widower, sitting there, with his white handkerchief, to receive condolences, with closed shutters, mortuary tapestries, and sepulchral cressets burning (which, however, the in-

stant the condolences are gone, he blows out, to save oil), has the audacity again, amid crocodile tears, to—drop hints! Nay more, he, wretched man in all senses, abridges the Lamotte table; will besiege virtue both in the positive and negative way. The Lamottes, wintry as the world looks, cannot be gone too soon.

As to Lamotte the husband, he, for shelter against much, decisively dives down to the “subterranean shades of Rascaldom”; gambles, swindles; can hope to live, miscellaneously, if not by the Grace of God, yet by the Oversight of the Devil,—for a time. Lamotte the wife also makes her packages: and waving the unseductive Count Boulainvillier Save-all a disdainful farewell, removes to the *Belle Image* in Versailles; there within wind of Court, in attic apartments, on poor water-gruel board, resolves to await what can betide. So much, in few months of this fateful year, 1783, has come and gone.

Poor Jeanne de Saint-Remi de Lamotte Valois, Ex-Mantuamaker, Scion-of-Royalty! What eye, looking into those bare attic apartments and water-gruel platters of the *Belle Image*, but must, in spite of itself, grow dim with almost a kind of tear for thee! There thou art, with thy quick lively glances, face of a certain piquancy, thy gossamer untamable character, snappish sallies, glib all-managing tongue; thy whole incarnated, garmented, and so sharply appetent "spark of Life"; cast down alive into this World, without vote of thine (for the Elective Franchises have not yet got that length); and wouldst so fain live there. Paying scot-and-lot; providing, or fresh-scouring silk court-dresses; "always keeping a gig!" Thou must hawk and shark to and fro, from anteroom to anteroom; become a kind of terror to all men in place, and women that influence such; dance not light Ionic measures, but attendance merely; have weepings, thanksgiving effusions,

aulic, almost forensic, eloquence : perhaps eke out thy thin livelihood by some coqueties, in the small way ;—and so, most poverty-stricken, cold-blighted, yet with young keen blood struggling against it, spin forward thy unequal feeble thread, which the Atropos-scissors will soon clip !

Surely now, if ever, were that vague looming from Saverne welcome, as a weather-sign. How doubly welcome is his plush Eminence's personal arrival ;— for with the earliest spring he has come in person, as he periodically does ; vaporific, driven by his fixed-idea.

Genius, of the mechanical practical kind, what is it but a bringing-together of two Forces that fit each other, that will give birth to a third ? Ever, from Tubalcain's time, Iron lay ready-hammered ; Water, also, was boiling and bursting ; nevertheless, for want of a genius, there was as yet no Steam-engine. In his Eminence Prince Louis, in that huge, restless, incoherent

Being of his, depend on it, brave Countess, there are Forces deep, manifold ; nay, a fixed-idea concentrates the whole huge Incoherence as it were into one Force : cannot the eye of genius discover its *fellow* ?

Communing much with the Court *vale-taille*, our brave Countess has more than once heard talk of Boehmer, of his Necklace, and threatened death by water ; in the course of gossiping and tattling, this topic from time to time emerges ; is commented upon with empty laughter,— as if there lay no farther meaning in it. To the common eye there is, indeed, none : but to the eye of genius ? In some moment of inspiration, the question rises on our brave Lamotte : Were not *this*, of all extant Forces, the cognate one that would unite with Eminence Rohan's ? Great moment, light-beaming, fire-flashing ; like birth of Minerva ; like all moments of Creation ! Fancy how pulse and breath flutter, almost stop, in the greatness : the great not Divine Idea, the great Diabolic Idea, is

too big for her.—Thought (how often must we repeat it?) rules the world. Fire and, in a less degree, Frost; Earth and Sea (for what is your swiftest ship, or steamship, but a *Thought*—embodied in wood?); Reformed Parliaments, rise and ruin of Nations,—sale of Diamonds: all things obey Thought. Countess de Saint-Remi de Lamotte, by power of Thought, is now a made woman. With force of genius she represses, crushes deep down, her Undivine Idea; bends all her faculty to realise it. Prepare thyself, Reader, for a series of the most surprising Dramatic Representations ever exhibited on any stage.

We hear tell of Dramatists, and scenic illusion how “natural,” how illusive it was: if the spectator, for some half-moment, can half-deceive himself into the belief that it was real, he departs doubly content. With all which, and much more of the like, I have no quarrel. But what must be thought of

the Female Dramatist who, for eighteen long months, can exhibit the beautifullest Fata-Morgana to a plush Cardinal, wide awake, with fifty years on his head ; and so lap him in her scenic illusion that he never doubts but it is all firm earth, and the pasteboard Coulisse-trees are producing Hesperides apples? Could Madame de Lamotte, then, have written a "Hamlet"? I conjecture, not. More goes to the writing of a "Hamlet" than completest "imitation" of all characters and things in this Earth; there goes, before and beyond all, the rarest *understanding* of these, insight into their hidden essences and harmonies. Erasmus's Ape, as is known in Literary History, sat by while its master was shaving, and "imitated" every point of the process; but its own foolish beard grew never the smoother.

As in looking at a finished Drama, it were nowise meet that the spectator first of all got behind the scenes, and saw the burnt-corks, brayed-resin, thunder-barrels, and withered

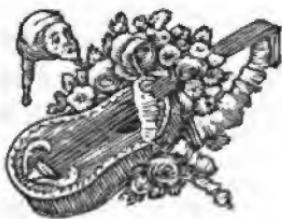
hunger-bitten men and women, of which such heroic work was made: so here with the reader. A peep into the side-scenes shall be granted him, from time to time. But, on the whole, repress, O reader, that too insatiable scientific curiosity of thine; let thy *aesthetic* feeling first have play; and witness what a Prospero's-grotto poor Eminence Rohan is led into, to be pleased he knows not why.

Survey first what we might call the stage-lights, orchestra, general structure of the theatre, mood and condition of the audience. The theatre is the World, with its restless business and madness; near at hand rise the royal Domes of Versailles, mystery around them, and as background the memory of a thousand years. By the side of the River Seine walks, haggard, wasted, a Joaillier-Bijoutier de la Reine, with Necklace in his pocket. The audience is a drunk Christopher Sly in the fittest humour. A fixed-idea, driving him over steep places, like that of

the Gadarenes' Swine, has produced a deceptibility, as of desperation, that will clutch at straws. Understand one other word; Cagliostro is prophesying to him! The Quack of Quacks has now for years had him in leading. Transmitting "predictions in cipher"; questioning, before Hieroglyphic Screens, Columbs in a state of innocence, for elixirs of life, and philosopher's stone; unveiling, in fuliginous clear-obscure, an imaginary majesty of Nature; he isolates him more and more from all unpossessed men. Was it not enough that poor Rohan had become a dissolute, somnolent-violent, ever-vapoury Mud-volcano; but black Egyptian magic must be laid on him!

If perhaps, too, our Countess de Lamotte, with her blandishments—? For though not beautiful, she "has a certain piquancy," *et cetera!*—Enough, his poor Eminence sits in the fittest place, in the fittest mood: a newly-awakened Christopher Sly; and with his "small ale," too,

beside him. Touch, only, the lights with fire-tipt rod ; and let the orchestra, soft-warbling, strike up their fara-lara fiddle-diddle-dee !



CHAPTER VII

MARIE-ANTOINETTE

SUCH a soft-warbling *vara-lara* was it to his Eminence, when, in early January of the year 1784, our Countess first, mysteriously, and under seal of sworn secrecy, hinted to him that, with her winning tongue and great talent as Anecdotic Historian, she had worked a passage to the ear of Queen's Majesty itself. Gods! dost *thou* bring with thee airs from Heaven? Is thy face yet radiant with some reflex of that Brightness beyond bright?—Men with fixed-idea are not as other men. To listen to a plain varnished tale, such as your Dramatist can fashion; to ponder the words; to snuff them up, as Ephraim did the east-wind, and grow flatulent and drunk with them: what else could poor Eminence do? His poor somnolent, so swift-rocked soul

feels a new element infused into it; turbid resinous light, wide-coruscating, glares over the waste of his imagination. Is he interested in the mysterious tidings? Hope has seized them; there is in the world nothing else that interests him.

The secret friendship of Queens is not a thing to be let sleep: ever new Palace Interviews occur;— yet in deepest privacy; for how should her Majesty awaken so many tongues of Principalities and Nobilities, male and female, that spitefully watch her? Above all, however, “on the 2d of February,” that day of “the Procession of blue Ribands,” much was spoken of: somewhat, too, of Monseigneur de Rohan! — Poor Monseigneur, hadst thou *three* long ears, thou ’dst hear her.

But will she not, perhaps, in some future priceless Interview, speak a good word for thee? Thyself shalt speak it, happy Eminence; at least, write it: our tutelary Countess will be the bearer! — On the 21st of

March goes off that long exculpatory imploratory Letter: it is the first Letter that went off from Cardinal to Queen; to be followed, in time, by "above two hundred others"; which are graciously answered by verbal Messages, nay, at length by Royal Autographs on gilt paper,— the whole delivered by our tutelary Countess. The tutelary Countess comes and goes, fetching and carrying; with the gravity of a Roman Augur, inspects those extraordinary chicken-bowels, and draws prognostics from them. Things are in fair train: the Dauphiness took some offence at Monseigneur, but the Queen has nigh forgotten it. No, inexorable Queen; ah, no! So good, so free, light-hearted; only sore beset with malicious Polignacs and others;— at times, also, short of money.

Marie-Antoinette, as the reader well knows, has been much blamed for want of Etiquette. Even now, when the other

accusations against her have sunk down to oblivion and the Father of Lies, this of wanting Etiquette survives her ; — in the Castle of Ham, at this hour, M. de Polignac and Company may be wringing their hands, not without an oblique glance at *her* for bringing them thither. She, indeed, discarded Etiquette ; once, when her carriage broke down, she even entered a hackney-coach. She would walk, too, at Trianon, in mere straw-hat, and perhaps muslin gown ! Hence, the Knot of Etiquette being loosed, the Frame of Society broke up ; and those astonishing “ Horrors of the French Revolution ” supervened. On what Damocles’ hairs must the judgment-sword hang over this distracted Earth ? Thus, however, it was that Tenterden Steeple brought an influx of the Atlantic on us, and so Godwin Sands. Thus, too, might it be that because Father Noah took the liberty of, say, rinsing out his wine-vat, his Ark was floated off, and a world drowned. — Beautiful

Highborn that wert so foully hurled low !
For, if thy Being came to thee out of old
Hapsburg Dynasties, came it not also (like
my own) out of Heaven ? *Sunt lacrymae*
rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt. Oh, is
there a man's heart that thinks, without
pity, of those long months and years of
slow-wasting ignominy ; — of thy birth,
soft-cradled in Imperial Schönbrunn, the
winds of heaven not to visit thy face too
roughly, thy foot to light on softness, thy
eye on splendour ; and then of thy Death
or hundred Deaths, to which the Guillotine
and Fouquier Tinville's judgment-bar
was but the merciful end ? Look *tbere*, O
man born of woman ! The bloom of that
fair face is wasted, the hair is grey with care ;
the brightness of those eyes is quenched,
their lids hang drooping, the face is stony
pale as of one living in death. Mean weeds,
which her own hand has mended, attire the
Queen of the World. The death-hurdle,
where thou sittest pale, motionless, which

only curses environ, has to stop : a people, drunk with vengeance, will drink it again in full draught, looking at thee there. Far as the eye reaches, a multitudinous sea of maniac heads ; the air deaf with their triumph-yell ! The Living-dead must shudder with yet one other pang ; her startled blood yet again suffuses with the hue of agony that pale face, which she hides with her hands. There is then *no* heart to say, God pity thee ? Oh, think not of these ; think of HIM whom thou worshippest, the Crucified, — who also treading the wine-press *alone*, fronted sorrow still deeper ; and triumphed over it, and made it holy ; and built of it a “Sanctuary of Sorrow,” for thee and all the wretched ! Thy path of thorns is nigh ended. One long last look at the Tuileries, where thy step was once so light, — where thy children shall not dwell. The head is on the block ; the axe rushes — Dumb lies the World ; that wild-yelling World, and all its madness, is behind thee.

Beautiful Highborn that wert so foully hurled low ! Rest yet in thy innocent grace-fully heedless seclusion, unintruded on by *me*, while rude hands have not yet desecrated it. Be the curtains, that shroud-in (if for the last time on this Earth) a Royal Life, still sacred to me. *Thy* fault, in the French Revolution, was that thou wert the Symbol of the Sin and Misery of a thousand years ; that with Saint-Bartholomews, and Jacqueries, with Gabelles, and Dragonades, and Parcs-aux-cerfs, the heart of mankind was filled full,—and foamed over, into all-involving madness. To no Napoleon, to no Cromwell wert thou wedded: such sit not in the highest rank, of themselves; are raised on high by the shaking and confounding of all the ranks ! As poor peasants, how happy, worthy had ye two been ! But by evil destiny ye were made a King and Queen of; and so both once more— are become an astonishment and a by-word to all times.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TWO FIXED-IDEAS WILL UNITE

COUNTESS DE LAMOTTE, then, had penetrated into the confidence of the Queen? Those gilt-paper Autographs were actually written by the Queen?" Reader, forget not to repress that too insatiable scientific curiosity of thine! What I know is, that a certain Villette-de-Rétaux, with military whiskers, denizen of Rascaldom, comrade there of Monsieur le Comte, is skillful in imitating hands. Certain it is also, that Madame la Comtesse has penetrated to the Trianon — Doorkeeper's. Nay, as Campan herself must admit, she has met, "at a Man-mid-wife's in Versailles," with worthy Queen's-valet Lesclaux,—or Desclos, for there is no uniformity in it. With these, or the like of these, she in the back-parlour of the

Palace itself (if late enough), may pick a merry-thought, sip the foam from a glass of Champagne. No farther seek her honours to disclose, for the present; or anatomically dissect, as we said, those extraordinary chicken-bowels, from which *she*, and she alone, can read Decrees of Fate, and also realise them.

Sceptic, seest thou his Eminence waiting there, in the moonlight; hovering to and fro on the back terrace, till she come out—from the ineffable Interview? He is close muffled; walks restlessly observant; shy also, and courting the shade. She comes: up closer with thy capote, O Eminence, down with thy broadbrim; for she has an escort. 'T is but the good Monsieur Queen's-valet Lessclaux: and now he is sent back again, as no longer needful. Mark him, Monseigneur, nevertheless; thou wilt see him yet another time. Monseigneur marks little: his heart is in the ineffable Interview, in the gilt-paper Autograph alone.—Queen's-valet

Lesclaux? Me thinks he has much the stature of Villette, denizen of Rascaldom! Impossible!

How our Countess managed with Cagliostro? Cagliostro, gone from Strasburg, is as yet far distant, winging his way through dim Space; will not be here for months: only his "predictions in cipher" are here. Here or there, however, Cagliostro, to our Countess, can be useful. At a glance, the eye of genius has descried him to be a bottomless slough of falsity, vanity, gulosity, and thick-eyed stupidity: of foulest material, but of fattest;—fit compost for the Plant she is rearing. Him who has deceived all Europe she can undertake to deceive. His Columbs, demonic Masonries, Egyptian Elixirs, what is all this to the light-giggling exclusively practical Lamotte? It runs off from her, as all speculation, good, bad, and indifferent, has always done, "like water from one in wax-cloth dress." With the lips meanwhile she can honour it; Oil of Flat-

tery, the best patent anti-friction known, subdues all irregularities whatsoever.

On Cagliostro, again, on his side, a certain uneasy feeling might, for moments, intrude itself; the raven loves not ravens. But what can he do? Nay, she is partly playing *bis* game: can he not spill her full cup yet, at the right season, and pack her out of doors? Oftenest in their joyous orgies, this light, fascinating Countess—who perhaps has a design on *bis* heart—seems to him but one other of those light *Papiliones*, who have fluttered round him in all climates; whom with grim muzzle he has snapt by the thousand.

Thus, what with light, fascinating Countess, what with Quack of Quacks, poor Eminence de Rohan lies safe; his Mud-volcano placidly simmering in thick Egyptian haze: withdrawn from all the world. Moving figures, as of men, he sees; takes not the trouble to look at. Court-cousins

rally him; are answered in silence; or, if it go too far, in mud-explosions terrifico-absurd. Court-cousins and all mankind are unreal shadows merely; Queen's favour the only substance.

Nevertheless, the World, on its side, too, has an existence; lies not idle in these days. It has got its Versailles Treaty signed, long months ago; and the plenipotentiaries all home again, for votes of thanks. Paris, London, and other great Cities and small, are working, intriguing; dying, being born. There, in the Rue Taranne, for instance, the once noisy Denis Diderot has fallen silent enough. Here also, in Bolt Court, old Samuel Johnson, like an over-wearied Giant, must lie down, and slumber without dream; — the rattling of carriages and wains, and all the world's din and business rolling by, as ever, from of old. — Sieur Boehmer, however, has not yet drowned himself in the Seine; only walks haggard, wasted, purposing to do it.

News (by the merest accident in the world) reach Sieur Boehmer, of Madame's new favour with her Majesty ! Men will do much before they drown. Sieur Boehmer's Necklace is on Madame's table, his guttural-nasal rhetoric in her ear : he will abate many a pound and penny of the first just price ; he will give cheerfully a thousand Louis-d'or, as *cadeau*, to the generous Scion-of-Royalty that shall persuade her Majesty. The man's importunities grow quite annoying to our Countess ; who, in her glib way, satirically prattles how she has been bored, — to Monseigneur, among others.

Dozing on down cushions, far inwards, with soft ministering Hebes, and luxurious appliances ; with ranked Heyducs, and a *Valetaille* innumerable, that shut out the prose-world and its discord : thus lies Monseigneur, in enchanted dream. Can he, even in sleep, forget his tutelary Countess, and her service ? By the delicatest presents he

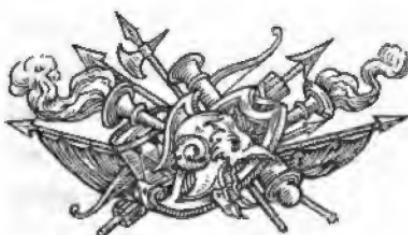
alleviates her distresses, most undeserved. Nay, once or twice, gilt Autographs, from a Queen,—with whom he is evidently rising to unknown heights in favour,—have done Monseigneur the honour to make him *her* Majesty's Grand Almoner, when the case was pressing. Monseigneur, we say, has had the honour to disburse charitable cash, on her Majesty's behalf, to this or the other distressed deserving object: say only to the length of a few thousand pounds, advanced from his own funds;—her Majesty being at the moment so poor, and charity a thing that will not wait. Always Madame, good, foolish, gadding creature, takes charge of delivering the money.—Madame can descend from her attics, in the *Belle Image*; and feel the smiles of Nature and Fortune, a little; so bounteous has the Queen's Majesty been.

To Monseigneur the power of money over highest female hearts had never been incredible. Presents have, many times, worked

wonders. But then, O Heavens, *what* present? Scarcely were the Cloud-Compeller himself, all coined into new Louis-d'or, worthy to alight in such a lap. Loans, charitable disbursements, however, as we see, are permissible: these, by defect of payment, may become presents. In the vortex of his Eminence's day-dreams, lumbering multi-form slowly round, this of importunate Boehmer and his Necklace, from time to time, turns up. Is the Queen's Majesty at heart desirous of it; but again, at the moment, too poor? Our tutelary Countess answers vaguely, mysteriously;—confesses, at last, under oath of secrecy, her own private suspicion that the Queen wants this same Necklace, of all things; but dare not, for a stingy husband, buy it. She, the Countess de Lamotte, will look farther into the matter; and, if aught serviceable to his Eminence can be suggested, in a good way suggest it, in the proper quarter.

Walk warily, Countess de Lamotte; for

now, with thickening breath, thou approachest the moment of moments! Principalities and Powers, *Parlement*, *Grand Chambre* and *Tournelle*, with all their whips and gibbet-wheels; the very Crack of Doom hangs over thee, if thou trip. Forward, with nerve of iron, on shoes of felt; *like* a Treasure-digger, in silence, looking neither to the right nor left,— where yawn abysses deep as the Pool, and all Pandemonium hovers, eager to rend thee into rags!



CHAPTER IX

PARK OF VERSAILLES

OR will the reader incline rather, taking the other and sunny side of the matter, to enter that Lamottic Circean theatrical establishment of Monseigneur de Rohan ; and see there how, under the best of Dramaturgists, Melodrama with sweeping pall flits past him ; while the enchanted Diamond fruit is gradually ripening, to fall by a shake ?

The 28th of July, of this same momentous 1784, has come ; and with it the most rapturous tumult into the heart of Monseigneur. Ineffable expectancy stirs-up his whole soul, with the much that lies therein, from its lowest foundations : borne on wild seas to Armida Islands, yet, as is fit, through Horror dim-hovering round, he tumultuously rocks. To the Château, to the Park !

This night the Queen will meet thee, the Queen herself: so far has our tutelary Countess brought it. What can ministerial impediments, Polignac intrigues, avail against the favour, nay — Heaven and Earth! — perhaps the tenderness of a Queen? She vanishes from amid their meshwork of Etiquette and Cabal; descends from her celestial Zodiac, to thee a shepherd of Latmos. Alas, a white-bearded pursy shepherd, fat and scant of breath! Who can account for the taste of females? But thou, burnish-up thy whole faculties of gallantry, thy fifty-years experience of the sex; this night, or never! — In such unutterable meditations does Monseigneur restlessly spend the day; and long for darkness, yet dread it.

Darkness has at length come. The perpendicular rows of Heyducs, in that Palais or Hôtel de Strasbourg, are all cast horizontal, prostrate in sleep; the very Concierge, resupine, with open mouth, audibly

drinks-in nepenthe; when Monseigneur, "in blue great-coat, with slouched hat," issues softly, with his henchman Planta of the Grisons, to the Park of Versailles. Planta must loiter invisible in the distance; Slouched-hat will wait here, among the leafy thickets; till our tutelary Countess, "in black domino," announce the moment, which surely must be near.

The night is of the darkest for the season; no Moon; warm, slumbering July, in motionless clouds, drops fatness over the Earth. The very stars from the Zenith see not Monseigneur; see only his and the world's cloud-covering, fringed with twilight in the far North. Midnight, telling itself forth from these shadowy Palace Domes? All the steeples of Versailles, the villages around, with metal tongue, and huge Paris itself dull-droning, answer drowsily, Yes! Sleep rules this Hemisphere of the World. From Arctic to Antarctic, the Life of our Earth lies all, in long swaths,

or rows (like those rows of Heyducs and snoring Concierge), successively mown down, from vertical to horizontal, by Sleep! Rather curious to consider.

The flowers are all asleep in Little Trianon, the roses folded-in for the night; but the Rose of Roses still wakes. O wondrous Earth! O doubly wondrous Park of Versailles, with Little and Great Trianon,— and a scarce-breathing Monseigneur! Ye Hydraulics of Lenôtre, that also slumber, with stop-cocks, in your deep leaden chambers, babble not of *bim*, when ye arise. Ye odorous balm-shrubs, huge spectral Cedars, thou sacred Boscage of Hornbeam, ye dim Pavilions of the Peerless, whisper not! Moon, lie silent, hidden in thy vacant cave; no star look down: let neither Heaven nor Hell peep through the blanket of the Night, to cry, Hold, Hold! — The Black Domino? Ha! Yes! — With stouter step than might have been expected, Monseigneur is under way; the Black Domino had

only to whisper, low and eager: "In the Hornbeam Arbour!" And now, Cardinal, O now!—Yes, there hovers the white Celestial; "in white robe of *linon moucheté*," finer than moonshine; a Juno by her bearing: there, in that bosket! Monseigneur, down on thy knees; never can red breeches be better wasted. Oh, he would kiss the royal shoe-tie, or its shadow if there were one: not words; only broken gaspings, murmuring prostrations, eloquently speak his meaning. But, ah, behold! Our tutelary Black Domino, in haste, with vehement whisper: "*On vient.*" The white Juno drops a fairest Rose, with these ever-memorable words, "*Vous savez ce que cela veut dire,* You know what that means"; vanishes in the thickets, the Black Domino hurrying her with eager whisper of "*Vite, vite, Away, away!*" for the sound of footsteps (doubtless from Madame, and Madame d'Artois, unwelcome sisters that they are!) is approaching fast. Monseigneur

picks up his Rose ; runs as for the King's plate, almost overturns poor Planta, whose laugh assures him that all is safe.

O Ixion de Rohan, happiest mortal of this world, since the first Ixion, of deathless memory,—who nevertheless, in that cloud-embrace, begat strange Centaurs ! Thou art Prime Minister of France without peradventure : is not this the Rose of Royalty, worthy to become ottar of roses, and yield perfume forever ? How *tbou*, of all people, wilt contrive to govern France, in these very peculiar times — But that is little to the matter. There, doubtless, is thy Rose (which, methinks, it were well to have a Box or Casket made for) : nay, was there not in the dulcet of thy Juno's "*Vous savez*" a kind of trepidation, a quaver, — as of still deeper meanings !

Reader, there is hitherto no item of this miracle that is not historically proved and *true*. — In distracted black-magical phan-

tasmagory, adumbrations of yet higher and highest Dalliances hover stupendous in the background: whereof your Georgels, and Campans, and other official characters *can* take no notice! There, in distracted black-magical phantasmagory, let these hover. The truth of them for us is that they do so hover. The truth of them in itself is known only to three persons: Dame self-styled Countess de Lamotte; the Devil; and Philippe Égalité,— who furnished money and facts for the Lamotte “Memoirs,” and, before guillotinement, begat the present King of the French.

Enough that Ixion de Rohan, lapsed almost into deliquium, by such sober certainty of waking bliss, is the happiest of all men; and his tutelary Countess the dearest of all women, save one only. On the 25th of August (so strong still are those villainous Drawing-room cabals) he goes, weeping, but submissive, by order of a gilt Autograph, home to Saverne; till

farther dignities can be matured for him. He carries his Rose, now considerably faded, in a Casket of fit price; may, if he so please, perpetuate it as potpourri. He names a favourite walk in his Archiepiscopal pleasure-grounds, *Promenade de la Rose*; there let him court digestion, and loyally somnambulate till called for.

I noticed it as a coincidence in chronology, that, few days after this date, the Demoiselle (or even, for the last month, Baroness) Gay d'Oliva began to find Countess de Lamotte "not at home," in her fine Paris hotel, in her fine Charonne country-house; and went no more, with Villette, and such pleasant dinner-guests, and her, to see Beaumarchais' "Mariage de Figaro" running its hundred nights.



CHAPTER X

BEHIND THE SCENES

THE Queen?" Good reader, *tbou* surely art not a Partridge the Schoolmaster or a Monseigneur de Rohan, to mistake the stage for a reality!— "But who this Demoiselle d'Oliva was?" Reader, let us remark rather how the labours of our Dramaturgic Countess are increasing.

New actors I see on the scene; not one of whom shall guess what the other is doing; or, indeed, know rightly what himself is doing. For example, cannot Messieurs de Lamotte and Villette, of Rascaldom, like Nisus and Euryalus, take a midnight walk of contemplation, with "footsteps of Madame and Madame d'Artois" (since all footsteps are much the same), without offence to any one? A Queen's Similitude can believe that a Queen's Self, for frolic's

sake, is looking at her through the thickets ; a terrestrial Cardinal can kiss with devotion a celestial Queen's slipper, or Queen's Similitude's slipper,—and no one but a Black Domino the wiser. All these shall follow each his precalculated course ; for their inward mechanism is known, and fit wires hook themselves on this. To two only is a clear belief vouchsafed : to Monseigneur, a clear belief founded on stupidity : to the great creative Dramaturgist, sitting at the heart of the whole mystery, a clear belief founded on completest insight. Great creative Dramaturgist ! How, like Schiller, "by union of the Possible with the Necessarily existing, she brings out the" —Eighty thousand Pounds ! Don Aranda, with his triple-sealed missives and hoodwinked secretaries, bragged justly that he cut down the Jesuits in one day : but here, without ministerial salary, or King's favour, or any help beyond her own black domino, labours a greater than he. How she

advances, stealthily, steadfastly, with Argus eye and ever-ready brain; with nerve of iron, on shoes of felt! O worthy to have intrigued for Jesuitdom, for Pope's Tiara; — to have been Pope Joan thyself, in those old days; and as Arachne of Arachnes, sat in the centre of that stupendous spider-web, which, reaching from Goa to Acapulco, and from Heaven to Hell, over-netted the thoughts and souls of men! — Of which spider-web stray tatters, in favourable dewy mornings, even yet become visible.

The Demoiselle d'Oliva? She is a Parisian Demoiselle of three-and-twenty, tall, blonde, and beautiful; from unjust guardians, and an evil world, she has had somewhat to suffer.

“ In this month of June, 1784,” says the Demoiselle herself, in her (judicial) Auto-biography, “ I occupied a small apartment in the Rue du Jour, Quartier Saint-Eustache. I was not far from the Garden of

the Palais-Royal ; I had made it my usual promenade." For, indeed, the real God's-truth is, I was a Parisian unfortunate-female, with moderate custom ; and one must go where his market lies. "I frequently passed three or four hours of the afternoon there, with some women of my acquaintance, and a little child of four years old, whom I was fond of, whom his parents willingly trusted with me. I even went thither alone, except for him, when other company failed.

"One afternoon, in the month of July following, I was at the Palais-Royal : my whole company, at the moment, was the child I speak of. A tall young man, walking alone, passes several times before me. He was a man I had never seen. He looks at me ; he looks fixedly at me. I observe even that always, as he comes near, he slackens his pace, as if to survey me more at leisure. A chair stood vacant ; two or three feet from mine. He seats himself there.

“ Till this instant, the sight of the young man, his walks, his approaches, his repeated gazings, had made no impression on me. But now, when he was sitting so close by, I could not avoid noticing him. His eyes ceased not to wander over all my person. His air becomes earnest, grave. An unquiet curiosity appears to agitate him. He seems to measure my figure, to seize by turns all parts of my physiognomy.—He finds me (but whispers not a syllable of it) tolerably like, both in person and profile; for even the Abbé Georgel says, I was a *belle courtisane*.

“ It is time to name this young man : he was the Sieur de Lamotte, styling himself Comte de Lamotte. Who doubts it? He praises ‘ my feeble charms’; expresses a wish to ‘ pay his addresses to me.’ I, being a lone spinster, know not what to say; think it best in the mean while to retire. Vain precaution! I see him all on a sudden appear in my apartment!”

On his “ninth visit” (for he was always civility itself), he talks of introducing a great Court-lady, by whose means I may even do her Majesty some little secret-service,—the reward of which will be unspeakable. In the dusk of the evening, silks mysteriously rustle: enter the creative Dramaturgist, Dame styled Countess de Lamotte; and so—the too intrusive scientific reader has now, for his punishment, *got* on the wrong-side of that loveliest Transparency; finds nothing but grease-pots, and vapour of expiring wicks!

The Demoiselle Gay d’Oliva may once more sit, or stand, in the Palais-Royal, with such custom as will come. In due time, she shall again, but with breath of Terror, be blown upon; and blown out of France to Brussels.

CHAPTER XI

THE NECKLACE IS SOLD

AUTUMN, with its grey moaning winds and coating of red strewn leaves, invites Courtiers to enjoy the charms of Nature; and all business of moment stands still. Countess de Lamotte, while everything is so stagnant, and even Boehmer has locked up his Necklace and his hopes for the season, can drive, with her Count and Euryalus Villette, down to native Bar-sur-Aube; and there (in virtue of a Queen's bounty) show the envious a Scion-of-Royalty *re-grafted*; and made them yellower looking on it. A well-varnished chariot, with the Arms of Valois duly painted in bend-sinister; a house gallantly furnished, bodies gallantly attired,—secure them the favourablest reception from all manner of men. The very Duc de Penthièvre (Égalité's

father-in-law) welcomes our Lamotte, with that urbanity characteristic of his high station and the old school. Worth, indeed, makes the man, or woman; but "leather" of gig-straps, and "prunella" of gig-lining, first makes it *go*.

The great creative Dramaturgist has thus let down her drop-scene; and only, with a Letter or two to Saverne, or even a visit thither (for it is but a day's drive from Bar), keeps up a due modicum of intermediate instrumental music. She needs some pause, in good sooth, to collect herself a little; for the last act and grand Catastrophe is at hand. Two fixed-ideas, Cardinal's and Jeweller's, a negative and a positive, have felt each other; stimulated now by new hope, are rapidly revolving round each other, and approximating; like two flames, are stretching-out long fire-tongues to join and be one.

Boehmer, on his side, is ready with the readiest; as, indeed, he has been these four

long years. The Countess, it is true, will have neither part nor lot in that foolish Cadeau of his, or in the whole foolish Necklace business : this she has, in plain words, and even not without asperity, due to a bore of such magnitude, given him to know. From her, nevertheless, by cunning inference, and the merest accident in the world, the sly Joaillier-Bijoutier has gleaned thus much, that Monseigneur de Rohan is the man.—Enough! Enough! Madame shall be no more troubled. Rest there, in hope, thou Necklace of the Devil; but, O Monseigneur, be thy return speedy!

Alas, the man lives not that would be speedier than Monseigneur, if he durst. But as yet no gilt Autograph invites him, permits him; the few gilt Autographs are all negatory, procrastinating. Cabals of Court; forever cabals! Nay, if it be not for some Necklace, or other such crotchet or necessity, who knows but he may *never* be recalled (so fickle is womankind); but forgotten,

and left to rot here, like his Rose, into potpourri? Our tutelary Countess, too, is shyer in this matter than we ever saw her. Nevertheless, by intense skilful cross-questioning, he has extorted somewhat; sees partly how it stands. The Queen's Majesty will have her Necklace; for when, in such case, had not woman her way? The Queen's Majesty can even pay for it — by instalments; but then the stingy husband! Once for all, she will not be seen in the business. Now, therefore, were it, or were it not, permissible to mortal to transact it secretly in her stead? That is the question. If to mortal, then to Monseigneur. Our Countess has even ventured to hint afar off at Monseigneur (kind Countess!) in the proper quarter; but his discretion in regard to money-matters is doubted. Discretion? And I on the *Promenade de la Rose*? — Explode not, O Eminence! Trust will spring of trial; thy hour is coming.

The Lamottes meanwhile have left their farewell card with all the respectable classes of Bar-sur-Aube ; our Dramaturgist stands again behind the scenes at Paris. How is it, O Monseigneur, that she is still so shy with thee, in this matter of the Necklace ; that she leaves the love-lorn Latmian shepherd to droop, here in lone Saverne, like weeping-ash, in naked winter, on his Promenade of the Rose, with vague commonplace responses that his hour is coming ? — By Heaven and Earth ! at last, in late January, it is *come*. Behold it, this new gilt Autograph : “ To Paris, on a small business of delicacy, which our Countess will explain,” — which I already know ! To Paris ! Horses ; postilions ; beef-eaters ! — And so his resuscitated Eminence, all wrapt in furs, in the pleasantest frost (Abbé Georgel says, *un beau froid de Janvier*), over clear-jingling highway rolls rapidly, — borne on the bosom of Dreams.

O Dame de Lamotte, has the enchanted

Diamond fruit ripened, then? Hast thou *given* it the little shake, big with unutterable fate? — I? can the Dame justly retort: Who saw me in it? — The reader, therefore, has still Three scenic Exhibitions to look at, by our great Dramaturgist; then the Fourth and last, — by another Author.

To us, reflecting how oftenest the true moving force in human things works hidden underground, it seems small marvel that this month of January, 1785, wherein our Countess so little courts the eye of the vulgar historian, should nevertheless have been the busiest of all for her; especially the latter half thereof.

Wisely eschewing matters of Business (which she could never in her life understand), our Countess will personally take no charge of that bargain-making; leaves it all to her Majesty and the gilt Autographs. Assiduous Boehmer nevertheless is in frequent close conference with Monseigneur:

the Paris Palais-de-Strasbourg, shut to the rest of men, sees the Joaillier-Bijoutier, with eager official aspect, come and go. The grand difficulty is — must we say it? — her Majesty's wilful whimsicality, unacquaintance with Business. She positively will not write a gilt Autograph, *authorising* his Eminence to make the bargain; but writes rather, in a pettish manner, that the thing is of no consequence, and can be given up! Thus must the poor Countess dash to and fro, like a weaver's shuttle, between Paris and Versailles; wear her horses and nerves to pieces; nay, sometimes in the hottest haste, wait many hours within call of the Palace, considering what *can* be done (with none but Villette to bear her company), — till the Queen's whim pass.

At length, after furious-driving and conferences enough, on the 29th of January, a middle course is hit on. Cautious Boehmer shall write out, on finest paper, his terms; which are really rather fair: Sixteen

hundred thousand livres; to be paid in five equal instalments; the first this day six months; the other four from three months to three months; this is what Court-Jewellers Boehmer and Bassange, on the one part, and Prince Cardinal Commendator Louis de Rohan, on the other part, will stand to; witness their hands. Which written sheet of finest paper our poor Countess must again take charge of, again dash-off with to Versailles; and therefrom, after trouble unspeakable (shared in only by the faithful Villette, of Rascaldom), return with it, bearing this most precious marginal note, "*Bon — Marie-Antoinette de France*," in the Autograph-hand! Happy Cardinal! this *thou* shalt keep in the innermost of all thy repositories. Boehmer, meanwhile, secret as Death, shall tell no man that he has sold his Necklace; or if much pressed for an actual sight of the same, confess that it is sold to the Favourite Sultana of the Grand Turk for the time being.

Thus, then, do the smoking Lamotte horses at length get rubbed down, and feel the taste of oats, after midnight ; the Lamotte Countess can also gradually sink into needful slumber, perhaps not unbroken by dreams. On the morrow the bargain shall be concluded ; next day the Necklace be delivered, on Monseigneur's receipt.

Will the reader, therefore, be pleased to glance at the following two Life-Pictures, Real-Phantasmagories, or whatever we may call them ; they are the two first of those Three scenic real-poetic exhibitions, brought about by our Dramaturgist : short Exhibitions, but essential ones.



CHAPTER XII

THE NECKLACE VANISHES

IT is the 1st day of February ; that grand
day of Delivery. The Sieur Boehmer is
in the Court of the Palais de Strasbourg ;
his look mysterious-official, and though
much emaciated, radiant with enthusiasm.
The Seine has missed him ; though lean,
he will fatten again, and live through new
enterprises.

Singular, were we not used to it : the
name "Boehmer," as it passes upwards and
inwards, lowers all halberts of Heyducs
in perpendicular rows : the historical eye
beholds him, bowing low, with plenteous
smiles, in the plush Saloon of Audience.
Will it please Monseigneur, then, to do the
ne-plus-ultra of Necklaces the honour of
looking at it ? A piece of Art, which the
Universe cannot parallel, shall be parted

with (Necessity compels Court-Jewellers) at that ruinously low sum. They, the Court-Jewellers, shall have much ado to weather it; but their work, at least, will find a fit Wearer, and go down to juster posterity. Monseigneur will merely have the condescension to sign this Receipt of Delivery: all the rest, her Highness the Sultana of the Sublime Porte has settled it.— Here the Court-Jeweller, with his joyous though now much-emaciated face, ventures on a faint knowing smile; to which, in the lofty dissolute-serene of Monseigneur's, some twinkle of permission could not but respond.— This is the First of those Three real-poetic Exhibitions, brought about by our Dramaturgist,— with perfect success.

It was said, long afterwards, that Monseigneur should have known, and even that Boehmer should have known, her Highness the Sultana's marginal note, her "*Right—Marie-Antoinette of France,*" to be a forgery and mockery: the "*of France*" was fatal

to it. Easy talking, easy criticising ! But how are two enchanted men to know ; two men with a fixed-idea each, a negative and a positive, rushing together to neutralize each other in rapture ?—Enough, Monseigneur has the *ne-plus-ultra* of Necklaces, conquered by man's valour and woman's wit ; and rolls off with it, in mysterious speed, to Versailles, — triumphant as a Jason with his Golden Fleece.

The Second grand scenic Exhibition by our Dramaturgic Countess occurs in her own apartment at Versailles, so early as the following night. It is a commodious apartment, with alcove ; and the alcove has a glass door. Monseigneur enters,—with a follower bearing a mysterious Casket, who carefully deposits it, and then respectfully withdraws. It is the Necklace itself in all its glory ! Our tutelary Countess, and Monseigneur, and we, can at leisure admire the queenly Talisman ; congratulate ourselves that the painful conquest of it is achieved.

But, hist ! A knock, mild but decisive, as from one knocking with authority ! Monseigneur and we retire to our alcove ; there from behind our glass screen, observe what passes. Who comes ? The door flung open : *de par la Reine !* Behold him, Monseigneur : he enters with grave, respectful, yet official air ; worthy Monsieur Queen's-valet Lesclaux, the same who escorted our tutelary Countess, that moonlight night, from the back apartments of Versailles. Said we not, thou wouldest see *him* once more ? — Me-thinks, again, spite of his Queen's-uniform, he has much the features of Villette of Rascaldom ! — Rascaldom or Valetdom (for to the blind all colours are the same), he has, with his grave, respectful, yet official air, received the Casket, and its priceless contents ; with fit injunction, with fit engagements ; and retires bowing low.

Thus softly, silently, like a very Dream, flits away our solid Necklace — through the Horn Gate of Dreams !

CHAPTER XIII

SCENE THIRD : BY DAME DE LAMOTTE

NOW, too, in these same days (as he can afterwards prove by affidavit of Landlords) arrives Count Cagliostro himself, from Lyons ! No longer by predictions in cipher ; but by his living voice, often in rapt communion with the unseen world, “with Caraffe and four candles” ; by his greasy prophetic bull-dog face, said to be the “most perfect quack-face of the eighteenth century,” can we assure ourselves that all is well ; that all will turn “to the glory of Monseigneur, to the good of France, and of mankind,” and of Egyptian Masonry. “Tokay flows like water” ; our charming Countess, with her piquancy of face, is sprightlier than ever ; enlivens with the brightest sallies, with the adroitest flatteries to all, those suppers of the gods. O

Nights, O Suppers — too good to last! Nay, now also occurs another and Third scenic Exhibition, fitted by its radiance to dispel from Monseigneur's soul the last trace of care.

Why the Queen does not, even yet, openly receive me at Court? Patience, Monseigneur! Thou little knowest those too intricate cabals; and how she still but works at them silently, with royal suppressed fury, like a royal lioness only *delivering* herself from the hunter's toils. Meanwhile, is not thy work done? The Necklace, she rejoices over it; beholds, many times in secret, her Juno-neck mirrored back the lovelier for it, — as our tutelar Countess can testify. Come to-morrow to the *Œil-de-Bœuf*; there see with eyes, in high noon, as already in deep midnight thou hast seen, whether in *her* royal heart there were delay.

Let us stand, then, with Monseigneur, in that *Œil-de-Bœuf*; in the Versailles Pal-

ace Gallery; for all well-dressed persons are admitted: there the Loveliest, in pomp of royalty, will walk to mass. The world is all in pelisses and winter furs; cheerful, clear,—with noses tending to blue. A lively, many-voiced hum plays fitful, hither and thither: of sledge parties and Court parties; frosty state of the weather; stability of M. de Calonne; Majesty's looks yesterday;—such hum as always, in these sacred Court-spaces, since Louis le Grand made and consecrated them, has, with more or less impetuosity, agitated our common Atmosphere.

Ah, through that long high Gallery what Figures have passed—and vanished! Louvois,—with the Great King, flashing fire-glances on the fugitive; in his red right hand a pair of tongs, which pious Maintenon hardly holds back! Louvois, where art thou? Ye *Maréchaux de France*? Ye unmentionable-women of past generations? Here also was it that rolled and rushed the “sound, absolutely like thunder,” of

Courtier hosts; in that dark hour when the signal-light in Louis the Fifteenth's chamber-window was blown out; and his ghastly infectious Corpse lay alone, forsaken on its tumbled death-lair, "in the hands of some poor women"; and the Courtier-hosts rushed from the Deep-fallen to hail the New-risen! These too rushed, and passed; and their "sound, absolutely like thunder," became silence. Figures? Men? They are fast-fleeting Shadows; fast chasing each other: it is not a Palace, but a Caravansera. — Monseigneur (with thy too much Tokay overnight)! cease puzzling: here *thou* art, this blessed February day: — the Peerless, will she turn lightly that high head of hers, and glance aside into the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, in passing? Please Heaven, she will. To our tutelary Countess, at least, she promised it; though, alas, so fickle is womankind! —

Hark! Clang of opening doors! She issues, like the Moon in silver brightness, down the Eastern steeps. *La Reine vient!*

What a figure! I (with the aid of glasses) discern *her*. O Fairest, Peerless! Let the hum of minor discoursing hush itself wholly; and only one successive rolling peal of *Vive la Reine*, like the movable radiance of a train of fireworks, irradiate her path.—Ye Immortals! She does, she beckons, turns her head this way!—“Does she not?” says Countess de Lamotte.—Versailles, the *Œil-de-Bœuf*, and all men and things are drowned in a Sea of Light; Monseigneur and that high beckoning Head are alone, with each other in the Universe.

O Eminence, what a beatific vision! Enjoy it, blest as the gods; ruminate and re-enjoy it, with full soul: it is the last provided for thee. Too soon, in the course of these six months, shall thy beatific vision, like Mirza’s vision, gradually melt away; and only oxen and sheep be grazing in its place;—and thou, as a doomed Nebuchadnezzar, be grazing with them.

“Does she not?” said the Countess de Lamotte. That it is a habit of hers; that hardly a day passes *without* her doing it: this the Countess de Lamotte did not say.



CHAPTER XIV

THE NECKLACE CANNOT BE PAID

THESE, then, the specially Dramaturgic labors of Countess de Lamotte may be said to terminate. The rest of her life is Histrionic merely, or Histrionic and Critical; as, indeed, what had all the former part of it been but a *Hypocrisia*, a more or less correct Playing of Parts? O “Mſs. Facing-both-ways” (as old Bunyan said), what a talent hadst thou! No Proteus ever took so many shapes, no Chameleon so often changed color. One thing thou wert to Monseigneur; another thing to Cagliostro, and Villette of Rascaldom; a third thing to the World, in printed “*Mémoires*”; a fourth thing to Philippe Égalité: all things to all men!

Let her, however, we say, but manage now to *act* her own parts, with proper His-

trionic illusion; and, by Critical glosses, give her past Dramaturgy the fit aspect, to Monseigneur and others: this henceforth, and not new Dramaturgy, includes her whole task. Dramatic Scenes, in plenty, will follow of themselves; especially that Fourth and final Scene, spoken of above as by another Author, — by Destiny itself.

For in the Lamotte Theatre, so different from our common Pasteboard one, the Play goes on, even when the Machinist has left it. Strange enough: those Air-images, which from her Magic-lantern she hung out on the empty bosom of Night, have clutched hold of this solid-seeming World (which some call the Material World, as if that made it more a Real one), and will tumble hither and thither the solidest masses there. Yes, reader, so goes it here below. What thou callest a Brain-web, or mere illusive Nothing, is it not a web of the Brain; of the Spirit which inhabits the Brain; and which, in this World (rather, as I think, to be named the

Spiritual one), very naturally moves and tumbles hither and thither all things it meets with, in Heaven or in Earth?—So, too, the Necklace, though we saw it vanish through the Horn Gate of Dreams, and in my opinion man shall never more behold it,—yet its activity ceases not, nor will. For no Act of a man, no Thing (how much less the man himself!) is extinguished when *it* disappears: through considerable times it still visibly works, though done and vanished; I have known a done thing work visibly Three Thousand Years and more: invisibly, unrecognised, all done things work through endless times and years. Such a Hypermagical is this our poor old Real world; which some take upon them to pronounce effete, prosaic! Friend, it is thyself that art all withered up into effete Prose, dead as ashes: know this (I advise thee); and seek passionately, with a passion little short of desperation, to have it remedied.

Meanwhile, what will the feeling heart

think to learn that Monseigneur de Rohan, as we prophesied, again experiences the fickleness of a Court; that, notwithstanding the beatific visions, at noon and midnight, the Queen's Majesty, with the light ingratitude of her sex, flies off at a tangent; and, far from ousting his detested and detesting rival, Minister Breteuil, and openly delighting to honour Monseigneur, will hardly vouchsafe him a few gilt Autographs, and those few of the most capricious, suspicious, soul-confusing tenor? What terrifico-absurd explosions, which scarcely Cagliostro, with Caraffe and four candles, can still; how many deep-weighed Humble Petitions, Explanations, Expostulations, penned with servidest eloquence, with craftiest diplomacy,—all delivered by our tutelar Countess: in vain!—O Cardinal, with what a huge iron mace, like Guy of Warwick's, thou smitest Phantasms in two, which close again, take shape again; and only thrashest the air!

One comfort, however, is that the Queen's Majesty has committed herself. The Rose of Trianon, and what may pertain thereto, lies it not here? That "*Right—Marie-Antoinette of France*," too; and the 30th of July, first-instalment-day, coming? She shall be *brought* to terms, good Eminence! Order horses and beef-eaters for Saverne; there, ceasing all written or oral communications, starve her into capitulating. It is the bright May month: his Eminence again somnambulates the *Promenade de la Rose*; but now with grim dry eyes; and, from time to time, terrifically stamping.

But who is this that I see mounted on costliest horse and horse-gear; betting at Newmarket Races; though he can speak no Engiish word, and only some Chevalier O'Niel, some Capuchin Macdermot, from Bar-sur-Aube, interprets his French into the dialect of the Sister Island? Few days ago I observed him walking in Fleet-street, thoughtfully through Temple-Bar; — in

deep treaty with Jeweller Jeffreys, with Jeweller Grey, for the sale of Diamonds: such a lot as one may boast of. A tall handsome man; with ex-military whiskers; with a look of troubled gayety, and rascallism: you think it is the Sieur self-styled Count de Lamotte; nay, the man himself confesses it! The Diamonds were a present to his Countess,—from the still-bountiful Queen.

Villette, too, has he completed his sales at Amsterdam? Him I shall by-and-by behold; not betting at Newmarket, but drinking wine and ardent spirits in the Taverns of Geneva. Ill-gotten wealth endures not; Rascaldom has no strong-box. Countess de Lamotte, for what a set of cormorant scoundrels hast thou laboured, art thou still labouring!

Still labouring, we may say: for as the fatal 30th of July approaches, what is to be looked for but universal Earthquake; Mud-explosion that will blot-out the face

of Nature? Methinks, stood I in thy patterns, Dame de Lamotte, I would cut and run.—“Run!” exclaims she, with a toss of indignant astonishment: “Calumniated Innocence run?” For it is singular how in some minds, which are mere bottomless “chaotic whirlpools of gilt shreds,” there is no deliberate Lying whatever; and nothing is either believed or disbelieved, but only (with some transient suitable Histrionic emotion) spoken and heard.

Had Dame de Lamotte a certain greatness of character, then; at least, a strength of transcendent audacity, amounting to the bastard-heroic? Great, indubitably great, is her Dramaturgic and Histrionic talent; but as for the rest, one must answer, with reluctance, No. Mrs. Facing-both-ways is a “Spark of vehement Life,” but the farthest in the world from a brave woman; she did not, in any case, show the bravery of a woman; did, in many cases, show the mere screaming trepidation of one. Her grand

quality is rather to be reckoned negative ; the “untamableness” as of a fly ; the “wax-cloth dress” from which so much ran down like water. Small sparrows, as I learn, have been trained to fire cannon ; but would make poor Artillery Officers in a Waterloo. Thou dost not call that Cork a strong swimmer ? Which nevertheless shoots, without hurt, the Falls of Niagara ; defies the thunderbolt itself to sink it, for more than a moment. Without intellect, imagination, power of attention, or any spiritual faculty, how brave were one,—with fit motive for it, such as hunger ! How much might one dare, by the simplest of methods, by not thinking of it, not knowing it !—Besides, is not Cagliostro, foolish blustering Quack, still here ? No scapegoat had ever broader back. The Cardinal, too, has he not money ? Queen’s Majesty, even in effigy, shall not be insulted ; the Soubises, De Marsans, and high and puissant Cousins, must huddle the matter up : Calumniated Innocence, in

the most universal of Earthquakes, will find *some* crevice to whisk through, as she has so often done.

But all this while how fares it with his Eminence, left somnambulating the *Promenade de la Rose*; and at times truculently stamping? Alas, ill, and ever worse. The starving method, singular as it may seem, brings no capitulation; brings only, after a month's waiting, our tutelary Countess, with a gilt Autograph, indeed, and "all wrapt in silk threads, sealed where they cross,"—but which we read with curses.

We must back again to Paris; there pen new Expostulations; which our unwearied Countess will take charge of, but, alas, can get no answer to. However, is not the 30th of July coming?—Behold, on the 19th of that month, the shortest, most careless of Autographs: with some fifteen hundred pounds of real money in it, to pay the—*interest* of the first instalment; the principal, of some thirty thousand, not being at

the moment perfectly convenient! Hungry Boehmer makes large eyes at this proposal; will accept the money, but only as part of payment; the man is positive: a Court of Justice, if no other means, shall get him the remainder. What now is to be done?

Farmer-general Monsieur Saint-James, Cagliostro's disciple, and wet with Tokay, will cheerfully advance the sum needed—for her Majesty's sake; thinks, however (with all his Tokay), it were good to *speak* with her Majesty first.—I observe, meanwhile, the distracted hungry Boehmer driven hither and thither, not by his fixed-idea; alas, no, but by the far more frightful *ghost* thereof,—since no payment is forthcoming. He stands, one day, speaking with a Queen's waiting-woman (Madame Campan herself), in “a thunder-shower, which neither of them notice,”—so thunderstruck are they. What weather-symptoms for his Eminence!

The 30th of July has come, but no money; the 30th is gone, but no money. O Eminence, what a grim farewell of July is this of 1785 ! The last July went out with airs from Heaven, and Trianon Roses. *These* August days, are they not worse than dog's days; worthy to be blotted out from all Almanacs ? Boehmer and Bassange thou canst still see ; but only "return from them swearing." Nay, what new misery is this ? Our tutelary Histrionic Countess enters, distraction in her eyes ; she has just been at Versailles ; the Queen's Majesty, with a levity of caprice which we dare not trust ourselves to characterise, declares plainly that she will deny ever having got the Necklace; ever having had, with his Eminence, any transaction whatsoever ! — Mud-explosion without parallel in volcanic annals. — The Palais de Strasbourg appears to be beset with spies ; the Lamottes, for the Count, too, is here, are packing-up for Bar-sur-Aube. The Sieur Boehmer, has he fallen

insane? Or into communication with Minister Breteuil? —

And so, distractedly and distractively, to the sound of all Discords in Nature, opens that Fourth, final Scenic Exhibition, composed by Destiny.



CHAPTER XV

SCENE FOURTH : BY DESTINY

IT is Assumption-day, the fifteenth of August. Don thy pontificalia, Grand-Almoner ; crush down these hideous temporalities out of sight. In any case, smooth thy countenance into some sort of lofty-dissolute serene : thou hast a thing they call worshipping God to enact, thyself the first actor.

The Grand-Almoner has done it. He is in Versailles *Œil-de-Bœuf* Gallery ; where male and female Peerage, and all Noble France in gala various and glorious as the rainbow, waits only the signal to begin worshipping : on the serene of his lofty-dissolute countenance there can nothing be read. By Heaven ! he is sent for to the Royal Apartment !

He returns with the old lofty-dissolute

look, inscrutably serene: has his turn for favour actually come, then? Those fifteen long years of soul's travail are to be rewarded by a birth?— Monsieur le Baron de Breteuil issues; great in his pride of place, in this the crowning moment of his life. With one radiant glance, Breteuil summons the Officer on Guard; with another, fixes Monseigneur: “*De par le Roi, Monseigneur:* you are arrested! At *your* risk, Officer!” — Curtains as of pitch-black whirlwind envelop Monseigneur; whirl off with him, — to outer darkness. Versailles Gallery explodes aghast; as if Guy Fawkes's Plot had *burst* under it. “The Queen's Majesty was weeping,” whisper some. There will be no Assumption-service; or such a one as was never celebrated since Assumption came in fashion.

Europe, then, shall ring with it from side to side! — But why rides that Heyduc as if all the Devils drove him? It is Monsei-

gneur's Heyduc: Monseigneur spoke three words in German to him, at the door of his Versailles Hotel; even handed him a slip of writing, which, with borrowed Pencil, "in his red square cap," he had managed to prepare on the way thither. To Paris! To the Palais-Cardinal! The horse dies on reaching the stable; the Heyduc swoons on reaching the cabinet: but his slip of writing fell from his hand; and I (says the Abbé Georgel) was there. The red Portfolio, containing all the gilt Autographs, is burnt utterly, with much else, before Breteuil can arrive for apposition of the seals! — Whereby Europe, in ringing from side to side, must worry itself with guessing: and at this hour, on this paper, sees the matter in such an interesting clear-obscure.

Soon Count Cagliostro and his Seraphic Countess go to join Monseigneur, in State Prison. In few days, follows Dame de Lamotte, from Bar-sur-Aube; Demoiselle d'Oliva by-and-by, from Brussels; Villette-

de-Rétaux, from his Swiss retirement, in the
taverns of Geneva. The Bastille opens its
iron bosom to them all.



CHAPTER LAST

MISSA EST

THUS, then, the Diamond Necklace having, on the one hand, vanished through the Horn Gate of Dreams, and so, under the pincers of Nisus Lamotte and Euryalus Villette, lost its sublunary individuality and being ; and, on the other hand, all that trafficked in it, sitting now safe under lock and key, that justice may take cognisance of them,—our engagement in regard to the matter is on the point of terminating. That extraordinary “*Procès du Collier, Necklace Trial,*” spinning itself through Nine other ever-memorable Months, to the astonishment of the hundred and eighty-seven assembled *Parlementiers*, and of all Quidnuncs, Journalists, Anecdotists, Satirists, in both Hemispheres, is, in every sense, a “Celebrated Trial,” and belongs

to Publishers of such. How, by innumerable confrontations, and expiscatory questions, through entanglements, doublings and windings that fatigue eye and soul, this most involute of Lies is finally winded off to the scandalous-ridiculous cinder-heart of it, let others relate.

Meanwhile, during these Nine ever-memorable Months, till they terminate late at night precisely with the May of 1786, how many fugitive leaves, quizzical, imaginative, or at least mendacious, were flying about in Newspapers; or stitched together as Pamphlets; and what heaps of others were left creeping in Manuscript, we shall not say;—having, indeed, no complete Collection of them, and what is more to the purpose, little to do with such Collection. Nevertheless, searching for some fit Capital of the composite order, to adorn adequately the now finished singular Pillar of our Narrative, what can suit us better than the following, so far as we know, yet unedited,

Occasional Discourse, by Count Alessandro Cagliostro, Thaumaturgist, Prophet and Arch-Quack; delivered in the Bastille: Year of Lucifer, 5789; of the Mahometan Hegira from Mecca, 1201; of the Cagliostric Hegira from Palermo, 24; of the Vulgar Era, 1785.

“Fellow Scoundrels,—An unspeakable Intrigue, spun from the soul of that Circe-Megæra, by our voluntary or involuntary help, has assembled us all, if not under one roof-tree, yet within one grim iron-bound ring-wall. For an appointed number of months, in the ever-rolling flow of Time, we, being gathered from the four winds, did by Destiny work together in body corporate; and joint laborers in a Transaction already famed over the Globe, obtain unity of Name, like the Argonauts of old, as *Conquerors of the Diamond Necklace*. Ere long it is done (for ring-walls hold not captive the free Scoundrel forever); and we disperse

again, over wide terrestrial Space; some of us, it may be, over the very marches of Space. Our Act hangs indissoluble together; floats wondrous in the older and older memory of men: while *we* the little band of Scoundrels, who saw each other, now hover so far asunder, to see each other no more, if not once more only on the universal Doomsday, the Last of the Days !

“ In such interesting moments, while we stand within the verge of parting, and have not yet parted, methinks it were well here, in these sequestered Spaces, to institute a few general reflections. Me, as a public speaker, the Spirit of Masonry, of Philosophy, and Philanthropy, and even of prophecy, blowing mysterious from the Land of Dreams, impels to do it. Give ear, O Fellow Scoundrels, to what the Spirit utters ; treasure it in your hearts, practise it in your lives.

“ Sitting here, penned-up in this which, with a slight metaphor, I call the Central

Cloaca of Nature, where a tyrannical De Launay can forbid the bodily eye free vision, you with the mental eye see but the better. This Central Cloaca, is it not rather a Heart, into which, from all regions, mysterious conduits introduce and forcibly inject whatsoever is choicest in the scoundrelism of the Earth; there to be absorbed, or again (by the other auricle) ejected into new circulation? Let the eye of the mind run along this immeasurable venous-arterial system; and astound itself with the magnificent extent of Scoundrel-dom; the deep, I may say, unfathomable, significance of Scoundrelism.

“Yes, brethren, wide as the sun’s range is our Empire, wider than old Rome’s in its palmiest era. I have in my time been far; in frozen Muscovy, in hot Calabria, east, west, wheresoever the sky overarches civilized man: and never hitherto saw I myself an alien; out of Scoundrel-dom I never was. Is it not even said, from of old, by

the opposite party: ‘*All men are liars*’? Do they not (and this nowise ‘in haste’) whimperingly talk of ‘one just person’ (as they call him), and of the remaining thousand save one that take part with us? So decided is our majority.”—(Applause.)

“Of the Scarlet Woman,—yes, Monseigneur, without offence,—of the Scarlet Woman that sits on Seven Hills, and her Black Jesuit Militia, out foraging from Pole to Pole, I speak not; for the story is too trite: nay, the Militia itself, as I see, begins to be disbanded, and invalidated, for a second treachery; treachery to herself! Nor yet of Governments; for a like reason. Ambassadors, said an English punster, *lie* abroad for their masters. Their masters, we answer, *lie* at home for themselves. Not of all this, nor of Courtship with its Lovers’-vows, nor Courtiership, nor Attorneyism, nor Public Oratory, and Selling by Auction, do I speak: I simply ask the gainsayer, Which is the particular trade, profession,

mystery, calling, or pursuit of the Sons of Adam that they successfully manage in the other way? He cannot answer!— No: Philosophy itself, both practical and even speculative, has at length, after shamefulst groping, stumbled on the plain conclusion that Sham is indispensable to Reality, as Lying to Living; that without Lying the whole business of the world, from swaying of senates to selling of tapes, must explode into anarchic discords, and so a speedy conclusion ensue.

“ But the grand problem, Fellow Scoundrels, as you well know, is the *marrying* of Truth and Sham; so that they become one flesh, man and wife, and generate these three: Profit, Pudding, and Respectability that always keeps her Gig. Wondrously, indeed, do Truth and Delusion play into one another; Reality rests on Dream. Truth is but the *skin* of the bottomless Untrue: and ever, from time to time, the Untrue *sheds* it; is clear again; and the superan-

nuated True itself becomes a Fable. Thus do all hostile things crumble back into our Empire; and of its increase there is no end.

“O brothers, to think of the Speech without meaning (which is mostly ours), and of the Speech with contrary meaning (which is wholly ours), manufactured by the organs of Mankind in one solar day ! Or call it a day of Jubilee, when public Dinners are given, and Dinner-orationes are delivered : or say, a Neighbouring Island in time of General Election ! O ye immortal gods ! The mind is lost ; can only admire great Nature’s plenteousness with a kind of sacred wonder.

“ For tell me, what is the chief end of man ? ‘To glorify God,’ said the old Christian Sect, now happily extinct. ‘To eat and find eatables by the readiest method,’ answers sound Philosophy, discarding whims. If the method *readier* than this of persuasive-attraction is yet discovered,—point it

out! — Brethren, I said the old Christian Sect was happily extinct: as, indeed, in Rome itself, there goes the wonderfuller traditionary Prophecy, of that Nazareth Christ coming back, and being crucified a second time *there*; which truly I see not in the least how he could fail to be. Nevertheless, that old Christian whim, of an actual living and ruling God, and some sacred covenant binding all men in Him, with much other mystic stuff, does, under new or old shape, linger with a few. From these few keep yourselves forever far! They must even be left to their whim, which is not like to prove infectious.

“ But neither are we, my Fellow Scoundrels, without our Religion, our Worship; which, like the oldest, and all true Worships, is one of Fear. The Christians have their Cross, the Moslem their Crescent: but have not we too our — Gallows? Yes, *infinitely* terrible is the Gallows; it bestrides with its patibulary fork the Pit of bottomless

Terror. No Manicheans are we; our God is One. Great, exceeding great, I say, is the Gallows; of old, even from the beginning, in this world; knowing neither variableness nor decadence; forever, forever, over the wreck of ages, and all civic and ecclesiastic convulsions, meal-mobs, revolutions, the Gallows with front serenely terrible towers aloft. Fellow Scoundrels, fear the Gallows and have no other fear! *This* is the Law and the Prophets. Fear every emanation of the Gallows. And what is every buffet, with the fist, or even with the tongue, of one having authority, but some such emanation? And what is Force of Public Opinion but the infinitude of such emanations,—rushing combined on you, like a mighty storm-wind? Fear the Gallows, I say! O when, with its long black arm, *it* has clutched a man, what avail him all terrestrial things? These pass away, with horrid nameless dinning in his ears; and the ill-starred Scoundrel pendulates between

Heaven and Earth, a thing rejected of
both." — (Profound sensation.)

"Such, so wide in compass, high, gallows-high in dignity, is the Scoundrel Empire; and for depth, it is deeper than the Foundations of the World. For what was Creation itself wholly, according to the best Philosophers, but a Divulsion by the TIME-SPIRIT (or Devil so called); a forceful Interruption, or breaking asunder, of the old Quiescence of Eternity? It was Lucifer that fell, and made this lordly World arise. Deep? It is bottomless-deep; the very Thought, diving, bobs up from it baffled. Is not this that they call Vice of Lying the *Adam-Kadmon*, or primeval Rude-Element, old as Chaos mother's-womb of Death and Hell; whereon their thin film of Virtue, Truth and the like, poorly wavers—for a day? All Virtue, what is it, even by their own showing, but Vice transformed,—that is, manufactured, rendered artificial? 'Man's Vices are the roots from which his Virtues

grow out and see the light,' says one: 'Yes,' add I, 'and thanklessly steal their nourishment!' Were it not for the nine hundred ninety and nine unacknowledged, perhaps martyred and calumniated Scoundrels, how were their single Just Person (with a murrain on him!) so much as possible?—Oh, it is high, high: these things are too great for me; Intellect, Imagination, flags her tired wings; the soul lost, baffled—"

—Here Dame de Lamotte tittered audibly, and muttered *Coq-d'Inde*, which, being interpreted into the Scottish tongue, signifies *Bubbly-Jock!* The Arch-Quack, whose eyes were turned inwards as in rapt contemplation, started at the titter and mutter: his eyes flashed outwards with dilated pupil; his nostrils opened wide; his very hair seemed to stir in its long twisted pigtails (his fashion of curl); and as Indignation is said to make Poetry, it here made Prophecy, or what sounded as such. With ter-

rible, working features, and gesticulation not recommended in any Book of Gesture, the Arch-Quack, in voice supernally discordant, like Lions worrying Bulls of Bashan, began:—

“ Sniff not, Dame de Lamotte; tremble, thou foul Circe-Megæra; thy day of desolation is at hand! Behold ye the Sanhedrim of Judges, with their fanners of written Parchment, loud-rustling, as they winnow all her chaff and down-plumage, and she stands there naked and mean?— Villette, Oliva, do *ye* blab secrets? Ye have no pity of her extreme need; she none of yours. Is thy light-giggling, untamable heart at last heavy? Hark ye! Shrieks of one cast out; whom they brand on both shoulders with iron stamp; the red-hot ‘V,’ thou *Volteuse*, hath it entered thy soul? Weep, Circe de Lamotte; wail there in truckle-bed, and hysterically gnash thy teeth: nay, do, smother thyself in thy door-mat coverlid; thou hast found thy mates; thou art in the

Salpêtrière!—Weep, daughter of the high and puissant Sans-inexpressibles! Buzz of Parisian Gossipry is about thee; but not to help thee: no, to eat before thy time. What shall a King's Court do with thee, thou unclean thing, while thou yet livest? Escape! Flee to utmost countries, hide there, if thou canst, thy mark of Cain!—In the Babylon of Fogland! Ha! is that my London? See I Judas Iscariot Égalité? Print, yea, print abundantly the abominations of your two hearts: breath of rattlesnakes can bedim the steel mirror, but only for a time.—And there! Aye, there at last! Tumblest thou from the lofty leads, poverty-stricken, O thriftless daughter of the high and puissant, escaping bailiffs? Descendest thou precipitate, in dead night, from window in the third story; hurled forth by Bacchanals, to whom thy shrill tongue had grown unbearable? Yea, through the smoke of that new Babylon thou fallest headlong; one long scream of screams makes night hideous;

thou liest there, shattered like addle egg,
 'nigh to the Temple of Flora!' O Lamotte,
 has thy *Hypocrisia* ended, then? Thy many
 characters were all acted. Here at last thou
 actest not, but art what thou seemest: a
 mangled squelch of gore, confusion, and
 abomination; which men huddle under-
 ground, with no burial-stone. Thou gal-
 lows-carrion!—"

—Here the prophet turned up his nose
 (the broadest of the eighteenth century),
 and opened wide his nostrils with such a
 greatness of disgust, that all the audience,
 even Lamotte herself, sympathetically imi-
 tated him.—“O Dame de Lamotte! Dame
 de Lamotte! Now, when the circle of thy
 existence lies complete; and my eye glances
 over these twoscore and three years that
 were lent thee, to do evil as thou couldst;
 and I behold thee a bright-eyed little Tat-
 terdemalion, begging and gathering sticks
 in the Bois de Boulogne; and also at length
 a squelched Putrefaction, here on London

pavements; with the head-dressings and hungerings, the gaddings and hysterical gigglings that came between,—*what* shall I say was the meaning of thee at all?—

“Villette-de-Rétaux! Have the catch-poles trepanned thee, by sham of battle, in thy Tavern, from the sacred Republican soil? It is thou that wert the hired Forger of Handwritings? Thou wilt confess it? Depart, unwhipt yet accursed.—Ha! The dread Symbol of our Faith? Swings aloft, on the Castle of Saint Angelo, a Pendulous Mass, which I think I discern to be the body of Villette! There let him end; the sweet morsel of our Juggernaut.

“Nay, weep not thou, disconsolate Oliva; blear not thy bright blue eyes, daughter of the shady Garden! Thee shall the Sanhedrim not harm: this Cloaca of Nature emits thee; as notablest of unfortunate-females, thou shalt have choice of husbands not without capital; and accept one. Know this; for the vision of it is true.

“ But the Anointed Majesty whom ye profaned? Blow, spirit of Egyptian Masonry, blow aside the thick curtains of Space! Lo you, her eyes are red with their first tears of pure bitterness; not with their last. Tire-woman Campan is choosing, from the Print-shops of the Quais, the reputed-best among the hundred likenesses of Circe de Lamotte: a Queen shall consider if the basest of women ever, by any accident, darkened daylight or candlelight for the highest. The Portrait answers: Never!”—(Sensation in the audience.)

“ — Ha! What is *this?* Angels, Uriel, Anachiel, and ye other five; Pentagon of Rejuvenescence; Power that destroyedst Original Sin; Earth, Heaven, and thou Outer Limbo which men name Hell! Does the **EMPIRE OF IMPOSTURE** waver? Burst there, in starry sheen, updarting, Light-rays from out *its* dark foundations; as it rocks and heaves, not in travail-throes, but in death-throes? Yea, Light-rays, piercing,

clear, that salute the Heavens,— lo, they *kindle* it; their starry clearness becomes as red Hell-fire! **IMPOSTURE** is in flames, Imposture is burnt up: one Red-Sea of Fire, wild-billowing enwraps the World; with its fire-tongue licks at the very stars. Thrones are hurled into it, and Dubois Mitres, and Prebendal Stalls that drop fatness, and — ha! what see I? — all the *Gigs* of Creation: all, all! Woe is me! Never since Pharaoh's Chariots, in the Red-Sea of water, was there wreck of Wheel-vehicles like this in the sea of Fire. Desolate, as ashes, as gases, shall they wander in the wind.

“ Higher, higher yet flames the Fire-Sea; crackling with new dislocated timber; hissing with leather and prunella. The metal Images are molten; the marble Images become mortar-lime; the stone Mountains sulkily explode. **RESPECTABILITY**, with all her collected *Gigs* inflamed for funeral pyre, wailing, leaves the Earth: not to return save under new Avatar. Imposture, how it burns,

through generations: how it is burnt up—
for a time. The World is black ashes ; which,
ah, when will they grow green? The Images
all run into amorphous Corinthian brass ;
all Dwellings of men destroyed; the very
mountains peeled and riven, the valleys
black and dead: it is an empty World! Woe
to them that shall be born then!—A
King, a Queen (ah me !) were hurled in;
did rustle once; flew aloft, crackling, like
paper-scroll. Oliva's Husband was hurled
in; Iscariot Égalité; thou grim De Launay,
with thy grim Bastille; whole kindreds and
peoples; five millions of mutually destroy-
ing Men. For it is the End of the Domin-
ion of IMPOSTURE (which is Darkness and
opaque Firedamp); and the burning-up, with
unquenchable fire, of all the Gigs that are
in the Earth!"—Here the Prophet paused,
fetching a deep sigh; and the Cardinal
uttered a kind of faint, tremulous Hem!

"Mourn not, O Monseigneur, spite of
thy nephritic colic and many infirmities.

For thee mercifully it was not unto death.
O Monseigneur (for thou hadst a touch
of goodness), who would not weep over
thee, if he also laughed? Behold! The not
too judicious Historian, that long years
hence, amid remotest wildernesses, writes
thy life, and names thee *Mud-volcano*;
even he shall reflect that it *was* thy Life,
this same; thy *only* chance through whole
Eternity; which thou (poor gambler) hast
expended *so*: and, even over his hard heart,
a breath of dewy pity for thee shall blow.
—O Monseigneur, thou wert not all ignoble:
thy Mud-volcano was but strength
dislocated, fire misapplied. Thou wentest
ravelling through the world; no Life-elixir
or Stone of the Wise could *we* two (for
want of funds) discover: a foulest Circe
undertook to fatten thee; and thou hadst
to fill thy belly with the east wind. And
burst? By the Masonry of Enoch, No! Be-
hold, has not thy Jesuit Familiar his Scouts
dim-flying over the deep of human things?

Cleared art thou of crime, save that of fixed-idea; weapest, a repentant exile, in the Mountains of Auvergne. Neither shall the Red Fire-Sea itself consume thee; only consume thy Gig, and, instead of Gig (O rich exchange!), restore thy Self. Safe beyond the Rhine-stream, thou livest peaceful days; savest many from the fire, and anointest their smarting burns. Sleep finally, in thy mother's bosom, in a good old age!"

— The Cardinal gave a sort of guttural murmur, or gurgle, which ended in a long sigh.

"O Horrors, as ye shall be called," again burst forth the Quack, "why have ye missed the Sieur de Lamotte; why not of him, too, made gallows-carrion? Will spear, or sword-stick, thrust at him (or supposed to be thrust), through window of hackney-coach, in Piccadilly of the Babylon of Fog, where he jolts disconsolate, not let out the imprisoned animal existence? Is he poisoned, too? Poison will not kill the Sieur Lamotte;

nor steel, nor massacres. Let him drag his utterly superfluous life to a second and a third generation; and even admit the not too judicious Historian to see his face before he die.

“But, ha!” cried he, and stood wide-staring, horror-struck, as if some Cribb’s fist had knocked the wind out of him: “O horror of horrors! Is it not *Myself* I see? Roman Inquisition! Long months of cruel baiting! *Life of Giuseppe Balsamo!* Cagliostro’s Body still lying in St. Leo Castle, his *Self* fled—*wbitter?* Bystanders wag their heads, and say: ‘The Brow of Brass, behold how it has got all unlacquered; these Pinchbeck lips can lie no more!’ Eheu! Ohoo!”—And he burst into unstanchable blubbering of tears; and sobbing out the moanfullest broken howl, sank down in swoon; to be put to bed by De Launay and others.

Thus spoke (or thus might have spoken), and prophesied, the Arch-Quack Cagliostro: and truly much better than he ever else

did: for not a jot or tittle of it (save only that of our promised Interview with Nestor de Lamotte, which looks unlikelier than ever, for we have not heard of him, dead or living, since 1826)—but has turned out to be literally *true*. As, indeed, in all this History, one jot or tittle of untruth, that we could render true, is perhaps not discoverable; much as the distrustful reader may have disbelieved.

Here, then, our little labour ends. The Necklace was, and is no more: the stones of it again “circulate in commerce,” some of them perhaps in Rundle’s at this hour; and may give rise to what other Histories we know not. The Conquerors of it, every one that trafficked in it, have they not all had their due, which was Death?

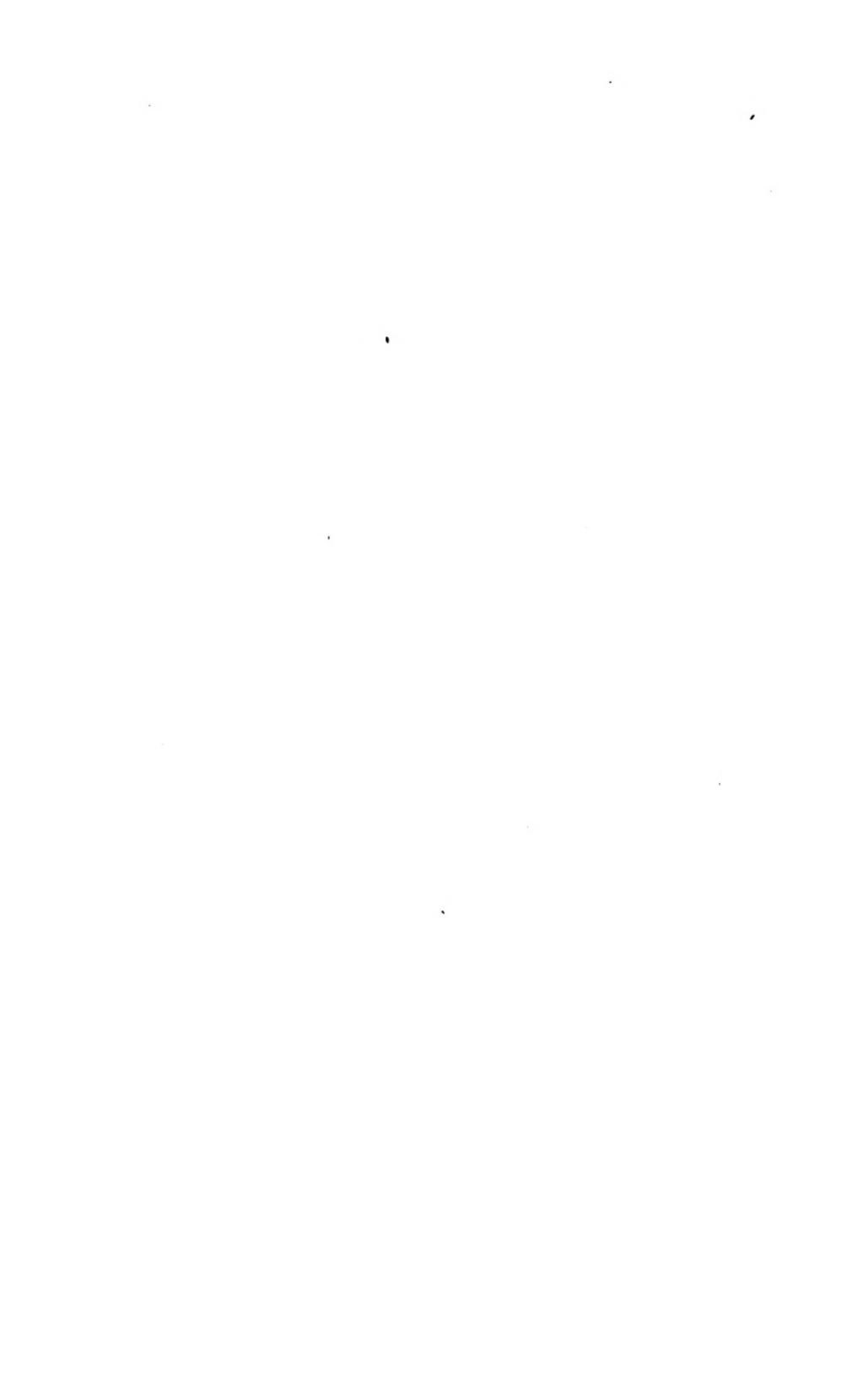
This little Business, like a little cloud, bodied itself forth in skies clear to the unobservant: but with such hues of deep-tinted villainy, dissoluteness and general

delirium as, to the observant, betokened it electric; and wise men, a Goethe, for example, boded Earthquakes. Has not the Earthquake come?

THE END

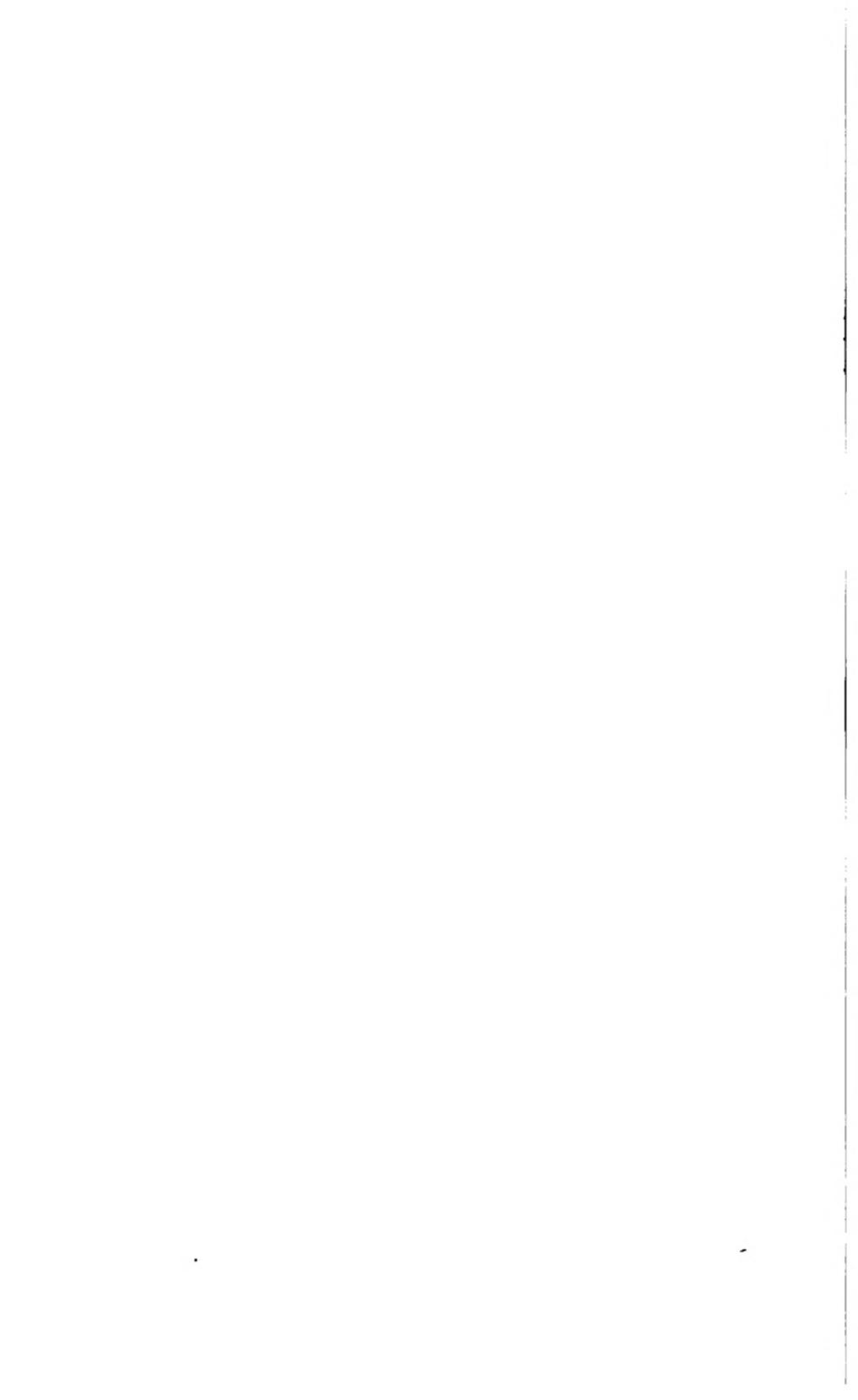


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